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by James Park Associates
Luxury Issue

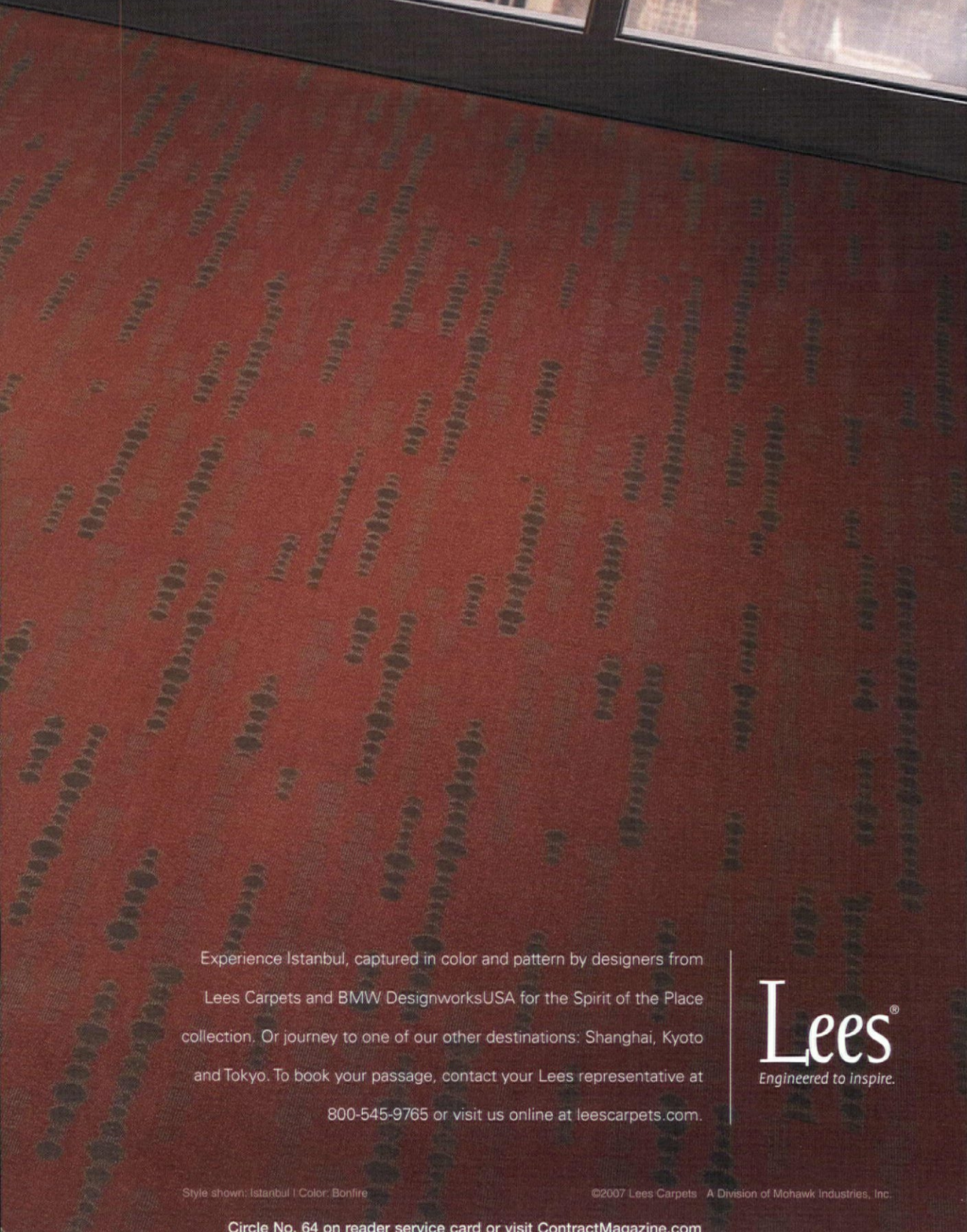
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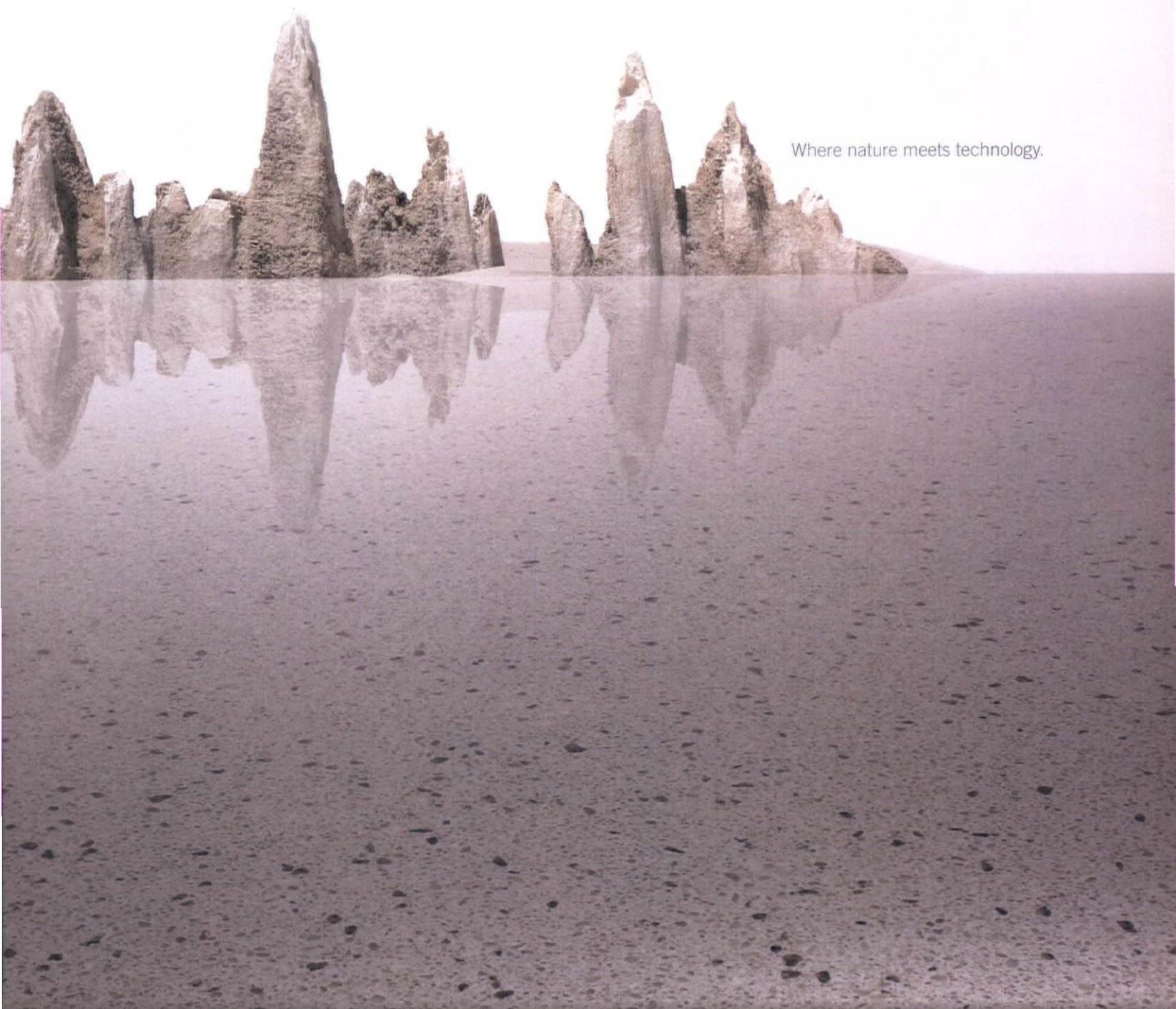
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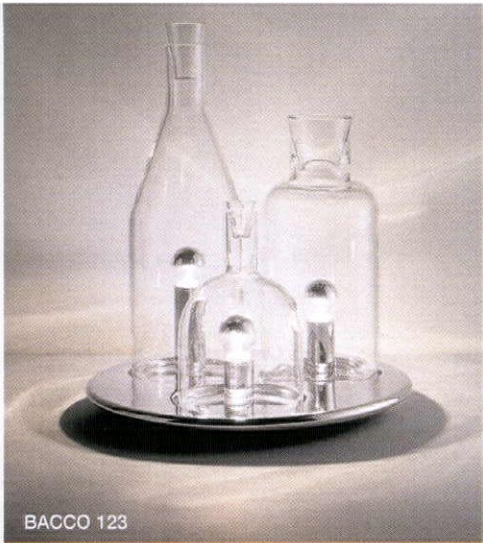
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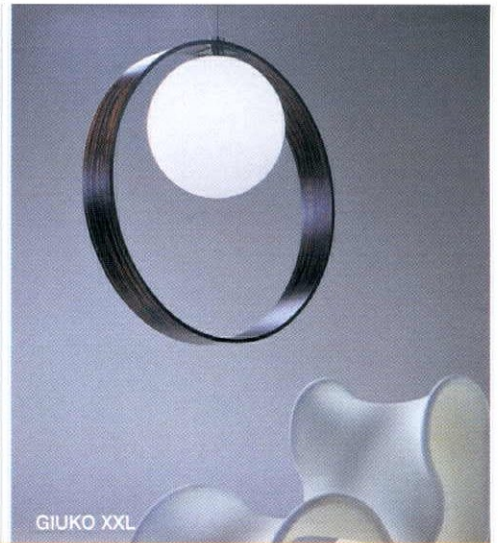
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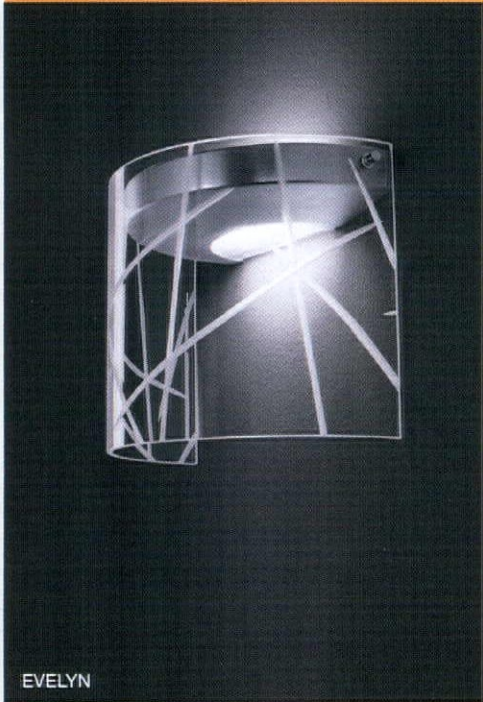
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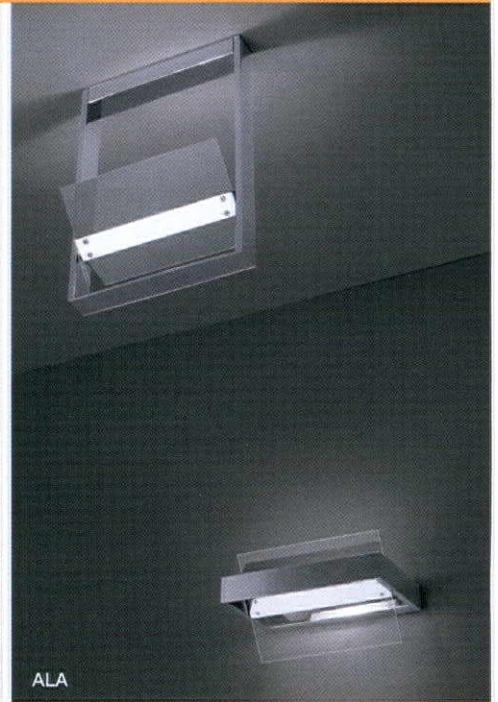
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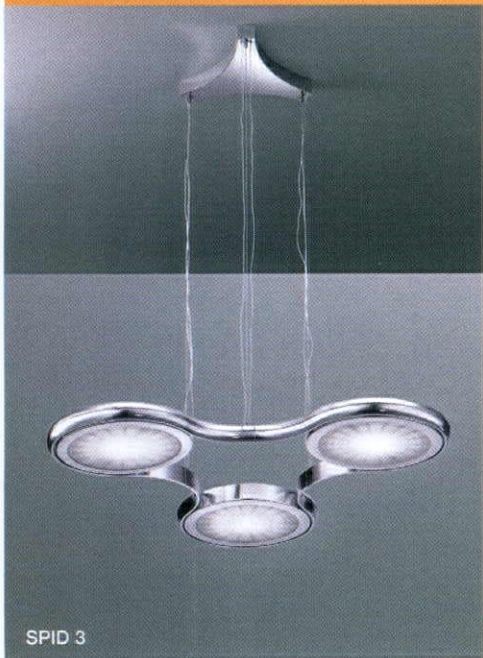
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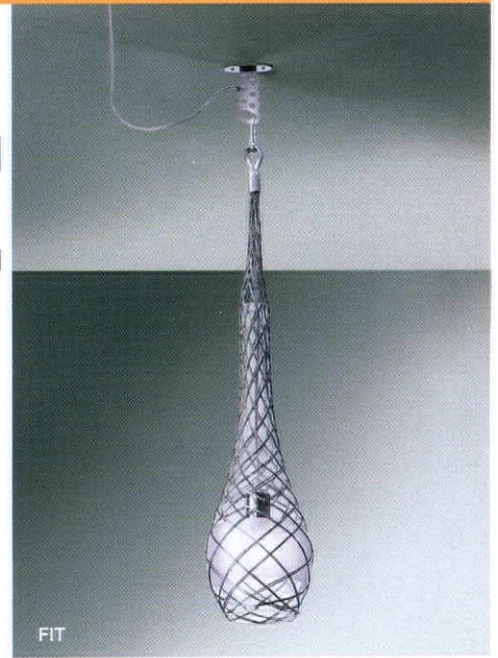


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the growing chasm

There's a good reason why the luxury market continues to grow and why designers continue to find lots of exciting business opportunities with clients (like the ones featured in this issue of *Contract*) that cater to a wealthier, more upscale demographic. According to statistics generated by The Luxury Marketing Council of Los Angeles (and passed on to me by Lloyd Princeton, president of the New York- and Los Angeles-based Design Management Company), real household income is up 70 percent for the top 20 percent in the last 20 years. There are 2.2 million individuals or households in the United States with liquid portfolios of \$1 million or more and 1.2 million households with a net worth of \$5 million. The number of individuals with assets of \$30 million or more grew 45 percent between 2002 and 2003. There are 200 billionaires in 2007 versus 12 in 1982.

"Global tourism is thriving, and the luxury segment, the top 15 percent of the market by price, is driving it," says Princeton. "With rates as high as \$25,000 a night, these are the most profitable rooms in a hotel, and they consistently have the highest occupancy rates. Revenues from luxury rooms grew more than 10 percent from 2005 to 2006, outpacing overall room revenue, which gained 8 percent, according to Smith Travel Research."

Even more mind-boggling, however, are these statistics from an article in the International Herald Tribune about the Cooper Hewitt's recent

exhibit, "Design for the Other 90 %." Of the 6.5 billion people on the planet, 90 percent cannot afford basic products and services, and 50 percent lack regular access to food, shelter, or clean water. Many of these people live in parts of the world where the most exotic resort experiences are being developed or are already thriving. And many live right here in the United States, in our own urban and rural backyards.

If these disparate numbers don't cause the A&D community to pause and consider a new perspective on design's role in and responsibility to society, then perhaps they should. They certainly did for *Contract's* editorial advisory board and a small group of invited guests and sponsors at the magazine's annual Design Forum, which took place in Phoenix in mid-October. Eye-opening presentations by John Cary, executive director of Public Architecture in San Francisco, and Cameron Sinclair, co-founder of Architecture for Humanity, also in San Francisco, set the stage for a conversation about socially responsible design that frankly raised more questions than it provided answers. Among the points raised was how our industry, in addition to supporting worthy causes for organizations like Public Architecture and Architecture for Humanity with donations of time and money, might influence the design process so that social responsibility becomes an inherent goal of every project in much the same way that aesthetics, the satisfaction of client needs, and increasingly, sus-



Jennifer Thiele Busch
Editor in Chief

tainability, are now. Another point raised was whether what constitutes "luxury" should be reevaluated to embrace the more noble qualities of good design like inclusion and an uplifting of the human condition, rather than its current emphasis on perceived elegance, pampering service, and lavish or exotic materials.

There is no intention here to pick on the luxury market (I have to be honest and reveal that the Design Forum took place at the lovely Arizona Biltmore, a venue we all enjoyed). In fact, some of the simplest design and construction projects—a low-budget elementary school in a rural community or a healthcare clinic in an inner city neighborhood—would also be considered the most unattainable of luxuries in many parts of the world. But the resounding answer to the question, "Can and should designers take a leading role in social responsibility?" seems to be "Yes." Whether it's through work on smaller, community-based projects like those supported by Public Architecture or a design response to large-scale humanitarian crises or disasters like those addressed by Architecture for Humanity, it boils down to the same elemental truth: There's no sense advocating to save the planet if we do not also advocate to save the many at-risk people on it. It's a multifaceted problem to be sure, but it's also a challenge where smart design thinking can provide some badly needed solutions. ■



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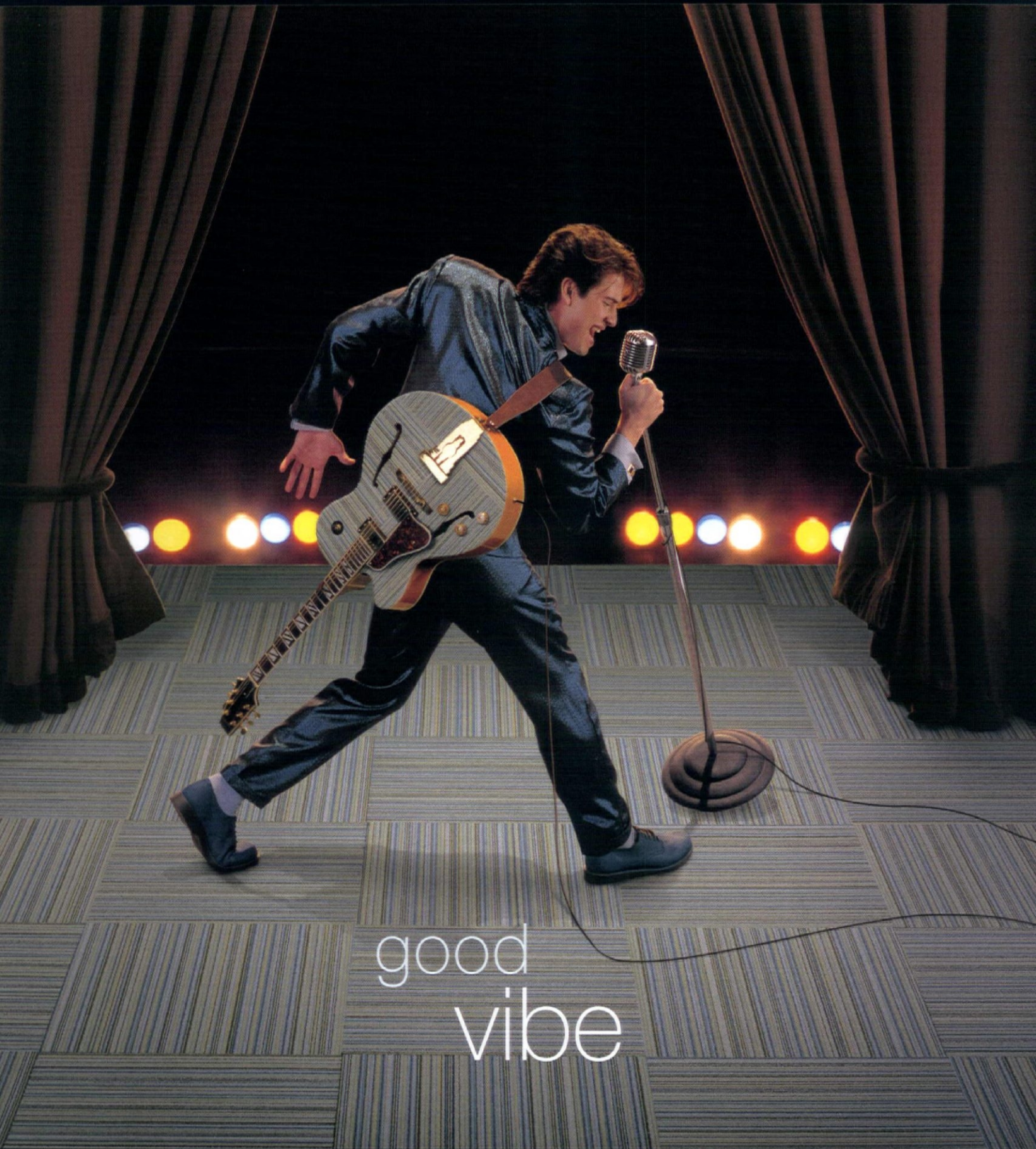
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Downtown Delight

New York—The trek to famed jeweler Tiffany & Co. just got a little shorter for downtown New Yorkers with the opening of an outpost of its Fifth Avenue store on Wall Street in lower Manhattan. Design firm Yabu Pushelberg worked with Tiffany’s in-house architects and designers to craft the new venture.

Housed in a 25-story building constructed in 1907, the 11,000-sq.-ft. space pairs modern interiors with the marble and Beaux Arts motif of the original building. Respecting the past, the design team retained and restored the original facade, elaborately detailed 35-ft. ceiling, decorative marble walls, crown moldings, and carved cornice columns. Modern counterpoints include a series of spacious rooms with 12-ft. glass walls, LED lighting, and stainless-steel cases. Other interior elements include custom-made carpeting and furnishings like forged iron benches and chairs upholstered in woven velvet, horsehair, and pinstripe flannel.

Perhaps the most dramatic element, however, is a large floating sculpture designed by lighting designer Ingo Maurer. Suspended 20 ft. in the air, the sculpture combines overlapping metal mesh panels and crystal drops, running 60 ft. along the interior wall and topping 22, 10-ft.-high internally lit glass and rosewood towers. Also contributing to the design: an array of Tiffany’s watches, which are housed in the towers.

The People’s Choice

New York—The people have spoken: TOMS Shoes, a company that matches every pair of shoes purchased with a donation of a pair to a child in need, is the winner of the People’s Design Award. Presented by The Smithsonian’s Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, the award is part of the museum’s National Design Week, and the recipient is recognized during the annual celebration for the National Design Awards

During voting, more than 130,000 visitors logged onto Cooper-Hewitt’s Web site to pick their choice from an array of nominees, from everyday objects and design classics to architectural monuments and examples of socially responsible design. In the end, the race came down to two: TOMS and the Floating Pool, a 20,000-sq.-ft. floating pool complex built within a steel-deck barge, commissioned by Ann Bittenwieser of the Neptune Foundation and designed by architect Jonathan Kirschenfeld. The Floating Pool was docked last summer at the Brooklyn Bridge Park Beach in Brooklyn, N.Y.

Blake Mycoskie, an entrepreneur, founded TOMS Shoes in 2006 following a string of successful ventures, including a collegiate laundry service, a 24/7 reality TV network, and a stint on the second season of “The Amazing Race.” His inspiration for the company—whose slip-on shoes are inspired by the traditional, rope-soled Argentine “alpargata”—came from a trip to Argentina, where



Photo by Paige Mycoskie.

he was struck by the poverty and health issues of the country. During the first year of business alone, TOMS sold 10,000 pairs of shoes and Mycoskie returned to Argentina to lead the company’s first shoe drop. This month, Mycoskie will travel to Africa, where he will be delivering more than 50,000 pairs of TOMS.

“I’m delighted that for the second year in a row, the public has chosen a socially conscious design that not only looks great, but helps the lives of less fortunate people around the world,” says Cooper-Hewitt director Paul Warwick Thompson. Last year, Marianne Cusato, designer of the Katrina Cottage, was the first People’s Design Award winner.



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FRUSTRATIONS OF A SCENT STICK

Being modern isn't as easy as it used to be. My friends and I used to qualify. I mean, our form meets our function, right? But no, that's not enough anymore. Now you're expected to last longer than the style movement you belong to. And you're not stylish unless you can help the environment. You're basically asked to be more modern than modern. Which grammatically I didn't think was possible.



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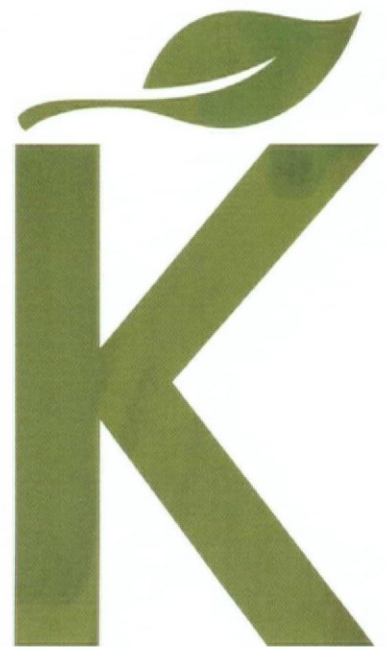
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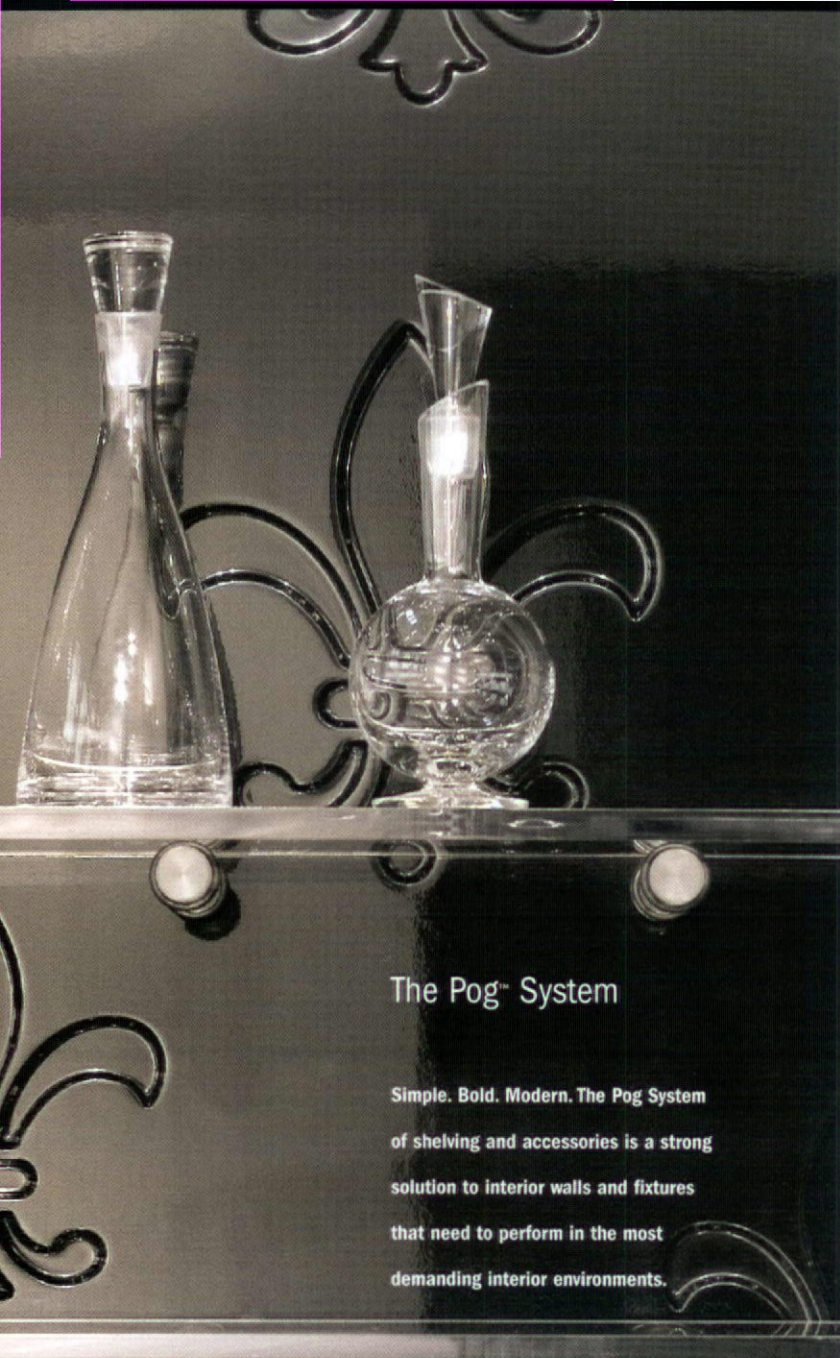


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Design on Ice

Canton, Mass. and New York—The National Hockey League (NHL) is skating into the retail arena with “NHL Powered by Reebok,” a new destination on the ground floor of the NHL’s new World Headquarters in Manhattan. Designed by Gensler, the store will serve as a year-round showcase for hockey and the league’s 30 teams, employing multi-sensory elements to immerse visitors in the sport.

Upon entering the store, visitors’ focus is drawn to a 22-ft. floor-to-ceiling video wall displaying larger-than-life, high-definition NHL highlights. Inside, walls are adorned with imagery of NHL players, while a custom in-store fixture showcases all 30 NHL teams’ jerseys on a single, 40-ft. display. What’s more, consumers also are treated to the first-ever merchandisable frozen “Ice Wall,” which will showcase the NHL Stanley Cup at various times throughout the year. “NHL Powered by Reebok” also is equipped with live satellite radio broadcasting capabilities. The space also features interactive e-commerce kiosks that allow patrons to place orders digitally.

Drawing architectural inspiration from the shapes, movements, materials, and marks of the sport, the design incorporates symbolic details including a custom-made chandelier/sculpture in the center of the room that is comprised of more than 400 regulation hockey sticks. Elsewhere, merchandising walls draw design cues from skate blades, while display fixtures are fluid to mimic the action of skating.

In addition to fulfilling their on- and off-ice needs, customers can quench their thirst, as Starbucks worked with Reebok and the NHL to create an integrated store-within-a-store, integrating the java giant’s traditional colors with a design that evokes the feeling of an outdoor hockey game.



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A Theatrical Debut

London—With its design complete, international firm WATG has unveiled its plans for the House of Musical Arts in Muscat, Oman. The venue, set for completion in 2010, will house a 1,000-seat concert hall that may be reduced in seating capacity for dramatic and operatic productions.

The venue's architecture is sympathetic to the style of regional public buildings and uses traditional forms of colonnades, terraces, and sculptural tower forms. In addition, it will be finished in locally-sourced light colored stone and complementary stucco. One distinctive feature: a mobile shell to the concert hall that can be detached so that an adjustable proscenium can drop in place to create a traditional theatre format.

The eight hectare site is being developed as the start of a new urban quarter with a formal landscaped park, a cultural souk with museums, retail, and coffee shops, and a village square that will enable the company to increase the number of performances.



Call for Entries

Ceramic Tiles of Italy is now accepting entries for its 15th Annual Design Competition, which celebrates outstanding examples of contemporary American design featuring Italian ceramic tiles. North American architects and interior designers are invited to submit residential, commercial, and institutional projects completed between January 2003 and January 2008. Entries may be submitted for domestic and international new construction and renovation projects.

Winners in each category will receive a \$5,000 cash prize and a trip to Coverings, which will be held in Orlando from April 29–May 2, 2008. Winners also will be treated to a five-day trip to Cersaie 2008, the world's largest exhibition for ceramic tile and bathroom furnishings in Bologna, Italy, and an additional \$1,000 to be shared by the winning contractor/distributor team.

More competition information is online at www.tilecompetition.com. Deadline for entering is Jan. 11, 2008. There is no fee or limit on the number of entries.



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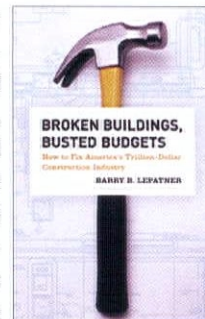
industry

Book Review

For architects sick of being relegated to the sidelines of the construction process, Barry B. LePatner, Esq., a New York-based construction attorney and founder of the law firm LePatner & Associates, has some good news. *Broken Buildings, Busted Budgets: How to Fix America's Trillion-Dollar Construction Industry* (The University of

Chicago Press, 2007) reveals how the construction industry needs reform, and how architects can fill an important role in launching the process. The book identifies the direction the industry should take, and offers advice on how architects can improve their value by more fully dedicating themselves to the owner's project business objectives.

LePatner builds a case for change to a risk-averse construction industry plagued with bad management, a shortage of capital investment, and ineffective supervision. He pinpoints two main issues perpetuating the industry's problems: The lack of true, fixed-price construction contracts and the absence of intermediaries who aggressively represent owner interests. It is here, by stepping back into the intermediary role, that architects can reclaim power in the construction process.



“Architects with the guts to assume added responsibility and the foresight to change their focus—and help change an industry—will thrive,” states LePatner. “Shaping a new construction paradigm will be a challenge, for owner, architect, and contractor alike. The architect who meets this challenge head on will reap the rewards of increased status, fees, and value to its clients.”

Coming Events

Art Basel Miami Beach
December 6–9
Miami Beach Convention Center
Miami Beach, Fla.
www.artbaselmiami.com

Heimtextil 2008
January 9–12, 2008
Frankfurt Fair and Exhibition Centre
Frankfurt, Germany
www.heimtextil.messefrankfurt.com

The 29th Annual Interiors Awards Breakfast
January 25, 2008
Cipriani's 42nd Street
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For more events, visit www.design-calendar.com.

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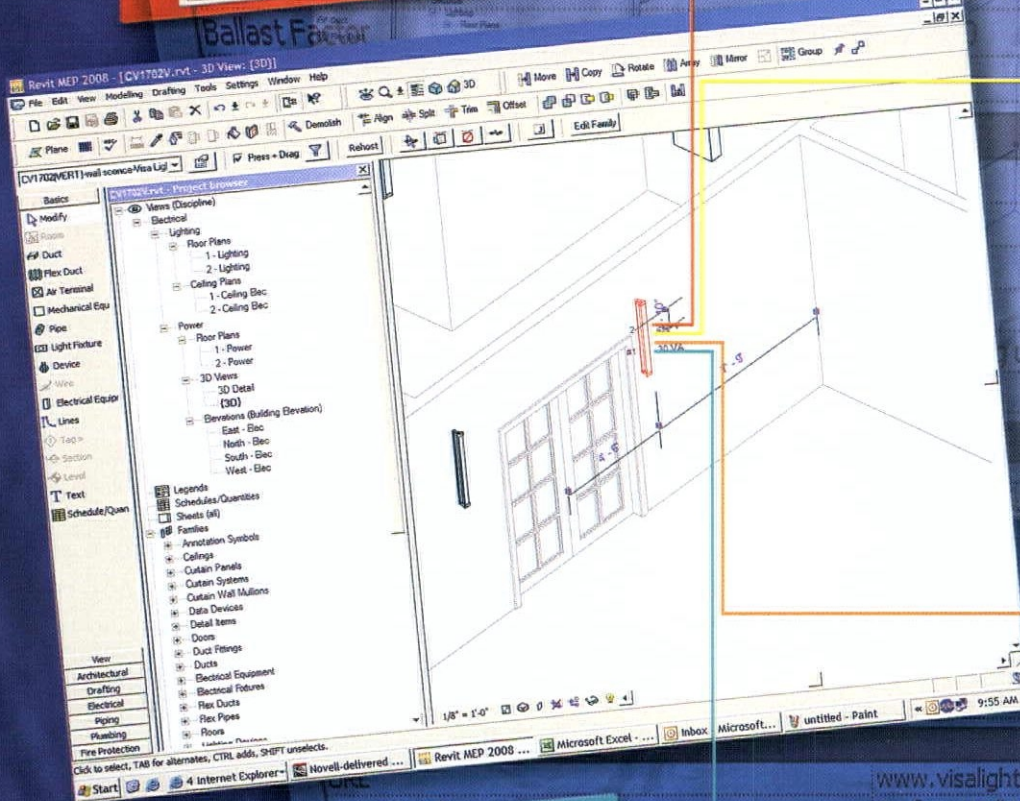
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UltraGlas

A new line of custom art glass, called UltraPalette, features abstract, hand-painted patterns including Venetian, Featherstone, Stipple Swirl, and Jackson (shown), a splatter technique reminiscent of the work of Jackson Pollock. All styles can be applied to both opaque and translucent glass.

www.ultraglas.com Circle No. 202



S. Russell Groves

S. Russell Groves has created an environmentally sustainable series of tables, chairs, soft upholstery, and cabinetry called The Dentro Collection. Each of the 11 customizable pieces are hand-made, using Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified woods as well as sustainable woods, palm, and bamboo. All sealants and lacquers comply with low emission regulations. Even details such as horn cabinet pulls are from naturally harvested resources. Shown here are two of the occasional tables, Slash and Slice.

www.srussellgroves.com Circle No. 203

AXO Light

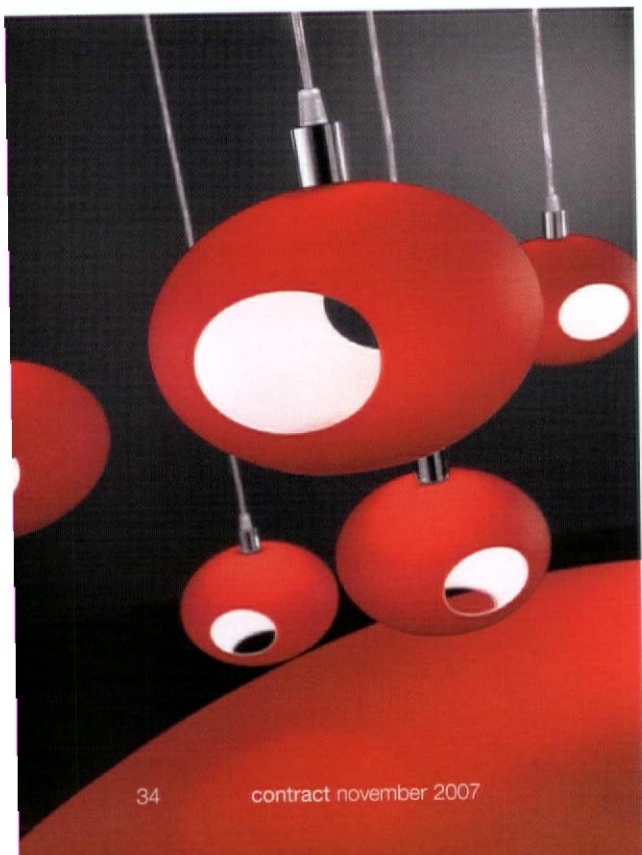
Ball-Up is one fixture in a contemporary, decorative lighting series from the Italian company Axo Light that showcases hand-blown pendants in red, black, and vanilla. All of the lamps have chrome fittings. www.axolight.it Circle No. 204



Krug

As a collection of stackable, multipurpose seating, Corfu offers a plethora of design options: It comes with or without arms, aluminum frames that are anodized or polished, and backs and seats that are plastic, wood, upholstered, or a combination thereof. A sleek and sophisticated work horse for Krug, Corfu works well indoors or out.

krug.ca Circle No. 205



A+DESIGN

From the new Italian company A+DESIGN comes sensuous bathroom fixtures with watery product names like Smooth, Stream, and Sweep. The Simple faucet is a sleek, single-lever fixture with a squared base that tapers to a softer, rounded shape at the spout.

www.acqua-design.com Circle No. 206



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Fabricteria Maki

Maki Yamamoto is a fabric designer who has migrated from the world of fashion to architectural textiles with her avant-garde company, Fabricteria Maki. Her collection of panels and window treatments are really 3-D pieces of artwork. This dynamic panel sheer, called Enn, is fabricated from brown silk, metal organza, and cotton.

www.fabricteriamaki.com Circle No. 207

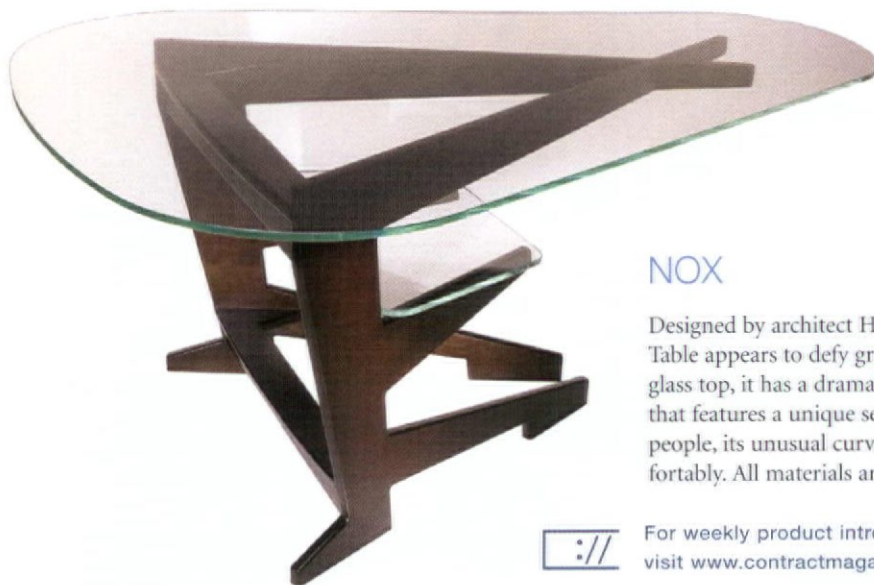


Nienkamper

The sleek, classically balanced Yabaco Chair, offered by Nienkamper, is designed using only minimal materials of a bar-stock steel frame with an upholstered shell. The frame is finished in either brushed or polished chrome, and the fiberglass seat shell is covered with polyurethane foam. Fine leather or fabric upholstery complete Yabaco's elegant appearance. www.nienkamper.com Circle No. 208

Lauren Saunders

Laura Saunders creates her Design Series of throw pillows from textured natural yarns such as loop mohair and ribbon merino wool. The result is a subtle shift in colors that stand up to dirt and wear. Each pillow is individually crafted on her California knit loom, using a hand-shaping technique. The four colorways—Ocean, Papyrus, Slice (shown), and Wild Grass—are available in three sizes. www.laurensaunders.com Circle No. 209



NOX

Designed by architect Hraztan Zeitlan, the NOX Dining/Meeting Table appears to defy gravity. With an oval, Starfire, low-iron, clear-glass top, it has a dramatic cantilevered wood support structure that features a unique secondary glass storage tray. Intended for five people, its unusual curved configuration can seat up to seven comfortably. All materials are fully recycled and recyclable. Circle No. 210



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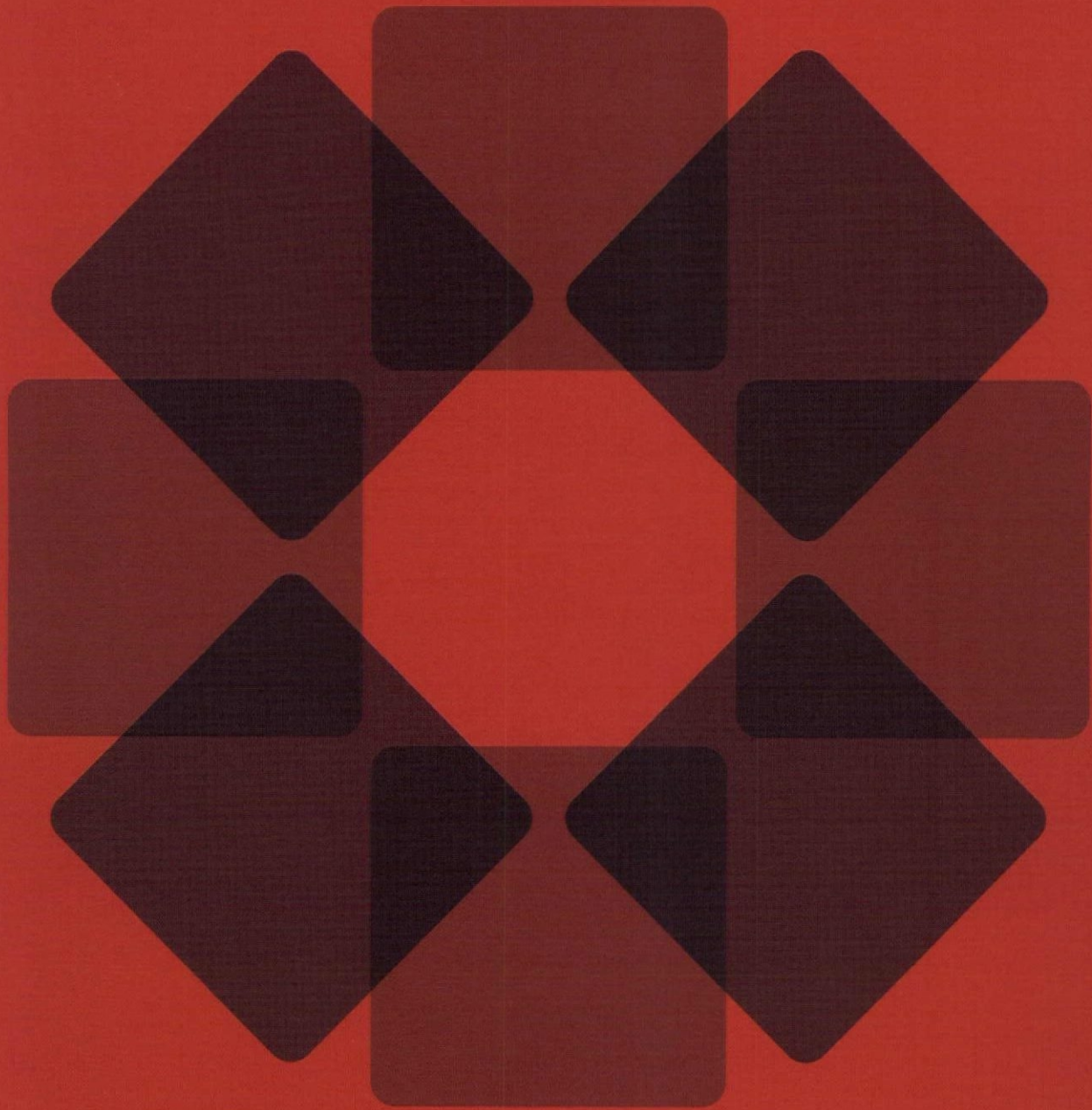
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LaCor

From the Philippines comes LaCor's Seeds Mirror. Its frame is created from the empty seed pods of the Ipil Ipil Tree that are artfully hand inlaid over a wood substrate and sealed in resin. The 30-in.-diameter mirror does well in high humidity on a protected patio. www.lacor.com Circle No. 211



Ola Voyna

A young Polish design team from Ola Voyna creates stylized outdoor furniture in the traditional art of blacksmithing. They also work in glass and stone and offer a standard collection of products as well as custom pieces. Shown here is the Tulip Table. www.olavoyna.com Circle No. 212

Fatboy

The outdoor version of the Fatboy beanbag chair can be used to sit, lay, flop, dream, or play. These fun and functional lounge bags come in bright colors and are made entirely from a water-resistant nylon that wipes clean with a damp cloth. Unlike traditional beanbag chairs, the outdoor Fatboy comes in large dimensions at 55 in. by 75 in. www.fatboyusa.com



Circle No. 213



Buddy Rhodes Concrete

These cast planters are an example of the custom Buddy Rhodes pressed or veined technique, a tone-on-tone bone color on bone. Rhodes runs a national network of concrete fabricators, called the Artisan Program, which create everything from planters to benches to sinks. Designers can check the website for a Buddy Rhodes Artisan in their region of the country, thereby cutting down on shipping costs and carbon emissions. www.buddyrhodes.com Circle No. 215

Triconfort

The Biarritz double deck chair, designed by Jorge Pensi, seats two people comfortably with a swivel base and a canopy for shade. It also functions as an outdoor bed. www.triconfort.com

Circle No. 214



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resources: outdoor furniture



Tropitone

The Cabana Club seating collection is both modern and modular. Framed in stainless steel, the pieces can be assembled in rectangles, triangles, and squares. Cushions, which contain commercial foam that drains and dries easily, can be upholstered in more than 300 Tropitone fabrics.

www.tropitone.com Circle No. 216

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Window Modes

Windowsheer is a new collection of four natural materials for window treatments.

Buntal is a fine white bamboo-like fiber that can be combined with other filaments, like knotted raffia, to create endless styles and textures. The other materials in the collection use hemp, bamboo silk, and pineapple fibers.

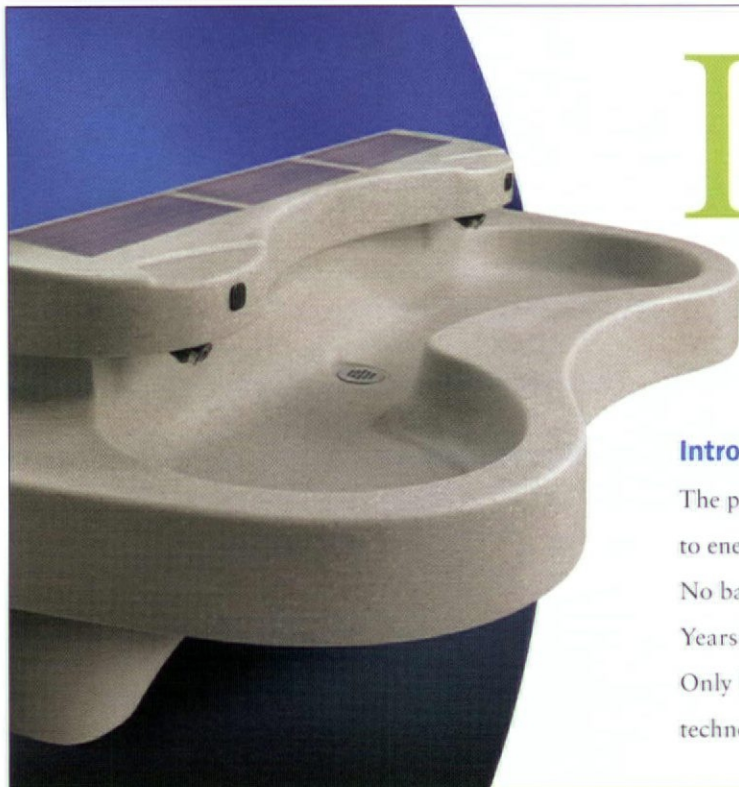
www.windowmodes.com Circle No. 217



The Branch Studio

The Conversation Chair is part of the whimsical collection of faux-bois outdoor furniture from The Branch Studio. Each piece is crafted by hand and constructed with an integral steel welded frame. Layers of concrete are added and hand-carved. These particular pieces have been tinted with both integral and surface-applied color washes.

www.thebranchstudio.com Circle No. 218



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bathing beauties

Forget the bed: It's time for the heavenly bath

By Katie Weeks



Kohler, Steward Waterless Urinal. Circle No. 220



Hansgrohe, Raindance Showerpipe. Circle No. 221



Danze, Sirius Single Handle Lavatory Faucet. Circle No. 219

Let's be honest: For an area that is a necessary component of almost any interior, the commercial bathroom often has been overlooked when it comes to discussions of glamour. The tide, however, is turning. Across the spectrum—from hotels and resorts to health clubs, public spaces like sports arenas and stadiums, and even some corporate spaces—the bathroom and its fixtures and furnishings offer another opportunity to get a leg up on the competition.

Today's bath fixtures and furnishings market is awash with new offerings combining forward-thinking technology with sleek, timeless design. The prevailing trend in most markets is to create the sense of a private haven.

Stylistically, the sector currently is gravitating toward minimalistic fixtures and finishes that make a contemporary, clean, and functional statement. As an added bonus in some cases, these



Delta, Trevi Cross Lavatory Faucet. Circle No. 222



Dornbracht, Symetrics Tub Fittings. Circle No. 223

European-influenced geometric fixtures help make smaller spaces seem roomier.

In terms of materials and finishes, chrome remains king, with polished nickel and brushed nickel, as well as platinum matte, following behind. For faucets, standard brass remains popular, while bathroom furniture is delving more into the wood realm as a way to warm up a space. But eclectic combinations—blending a modernist form with a more traditional finish, or mixing and matching pieces throughout a space—are popping up across the board.

Fixture and furnishing innovations also are being driven by ever-evolving technology as consumers continue to demand more intuitive products. In public spaces like sports stadiums, hands-free products are becoming a mainstay, while in higher-end hospitality applications, more refined showers are incorporating multiple body sprays and multifunctional hand showers. And consider-

ing hospitality functions, some hoteliers are re-evaluating room design with customer use in mind. Many brands, for example, have found that unless patrons are staying in a resort or luxury property, most visitors take showers, not baths, and as a result, rooms are being designed with larger showers instead of the standard shower/bath combination unit. Recognizing the differences experienced at luxury properties and resorts, these developers are adding high-end features like chromatherapy.

Technology also plays a key role in sustainable considerations. While the government limits water flow to a national standard of 2.5 gallons per minute, many manufacturers are aiming for much less, even achieving as low as 0.5 gallons of water per minute. The challenge here is to produce water-conserving fixtures like waterless urinals and low-flow aerators that do not compromise functionality. ☐



Duravit, Happy D Cabinet Wash Basin. Circle No. 224

Turning heads everywhere...



The Mesa Chair

AGATI

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Ceramic Tiles of Italy

the illusionist

Lauren Rottet works her magic to bring her refined design aesthetic to a new collection for Decca Contract

By Danine Alati

"I always like sculpture and form," says Lauren Rottet, FAIA, IIDA, principal at DMJM Rottet in Houston. "And there are always a lot of furniture ideas swimming around in my head." These floating concepts manifested themselves in a new collection she designed for Decca Contract Furniture that debuted at NeoCon® this past June. The Rottet by Decca lounge furniture collection was created as commercial pieces with a residential aesthetic, according to Rottet. "Less hard lined and more contemporary," she says, the products in the line each have a "strong individual story on their own, yet work together."


The collaboration between Rottet and Decca emerged out of past partnerships between the manufacturer and DMJM Rottet. "We talked about some unique ideas that Lauren has had, but she had been unable to find a company that could produce them at a marketable price," explains John W. Fischbach, president at Decca Contract in Dallas. "After reviewing the products and discussing the designs with our engineering department, it was determined that we could meet her expectations."

"Primarily, we wanted to showcase unusual, creative designs that highlight our abilities as craftsmen," Fischbach continues. "It was my goal to create products that allowed architects and designers to introduce aesthetically and creatively interesting products into their client's environments without depleting their budgets. Creativity in product design does not necessarily have to translate into millwork level prices."



Excited to realize concepts she had been considering for a while, Rottet prioritized her designs into several occasional tables; a bench; two-seat, three-seat, and sectional sofas; and pull up and lounge chairs. All products reflect a simplicity in form that are at once minimal yet visually dynamic. Considering that Decca has been predominantly known as a wood company, Rottet designed all seating options based on the simple concept of wood cradling fabric.

She also calls one of the coffee tables “the world’s most simple table,” as it features a stainless-steel body and wood top that come together seamlessly for visual continuity. She created another origami-esque table literally by folding paper, realizing that by manipulating a two dimensional form with bends, it can take on another form. Similarly, the square “slot” table, with an asymmetrical open slot inset with clear glass, was conceived as a folded piece of wood, while the table that Rottet refers to as a “slab of butter” took form when she cut angles into a solid rectangular block to change its shape. “[This table] comes in a variety of attitudes—with different cuts and angles. When I take that solid form and cut into it, it becomes something else entirely,” she says of this particular design, adding, “All the tables trick the eye.”

Rottet achieves perhaps the best optical illusion with an executive table/desk that appears to have an extremely slim profile edge from one perspective, when, in fact, the legs and top surface are formed by a unique angle. Leg panels also accommodate power/data. Furniture in this collection at once appears sturdy and substantial, but also minimal, sleek, and refined, a signature of Rottet’s designs. “These products are intended to be statements,” Fischbach adds, “artistic expressions in the form of furniture.”  Circle No. 200



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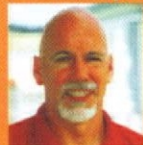
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COMPLIMENTAR DAILY KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS

Tuesday, February 5, 2008
To be announced

Wednesday, February 6, 2008



Kevin Danaher, Ph.D., author, Executive Director, Global Citizen Center and co-founder, Global Exchange, "Accelerating the Transition to the Green Economy".

Thursday, February 7, 2008



Cam Marston, Founder of Marston Communications "Four Generations in the Workplace: Searching for the Common Ground".

EVENT HOURS

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 05, 2008

Seminars 10:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Keynote Presentation 4:00 p.m.
Preview Gala 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 06 2008

Exhibits 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Seminars 10:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Keynote Presentation 4:00 p.m.

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 07, 2008

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Seminars 10:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

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Judith H. Heerwagen, Ph.D.,
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An Energy Aesthetic: Conservation Through Interior Design
Matthew Kubik, IDEC, RA, Indiana University—Purdue University Fort Wayne

Naturally Inspired Color and Interior Design

Andrew Dent, Ph.D., vice president, Material ConneXion

The New ADA Guidelines – What You Need to Know
Donna Kirby, FASID

Furniture and Space Planning that Meet Building Codes
Kimberly Marks, ASID, IIDA, principal, The Marks Design Group, San Antonio

The Art and Science of Office Ergonomics
Tim Springer, Ph.D., HFES, president, HERO, Inc.

Day 2 February 6, 2008

Restaurant Renegades Talk Design
Industry Panel

Solar Energy and Materials

Alison Mason, principal, SunJuice

Spa Design: Planning for Wellness and Operational Success

Brett Blumenthal, senior strategist, Gensler, Ralph Newman, chief operating officer, WTS International
Chris White, senior vice president, planning and design services, WTS International

Recent Research in Green Marketing and Product Design

Deborah Dunning, CEO/founder, The Green Standard.org
Robert Peoples, executive director, Care

Advanced Codes for Interiors
Kimberly Marks, ASID, IIDA, principal, The Marks Design Group

Game-Changing Technology Trends

Bran Ferren, co-chairman, Applied Minds

Day 3 February 7, 2008

Feel Like Buying: Quantifying Emotion in Retail Settings
Dan Hill, president, Sensory Logic, Inc.

New Ideas, Old Spaces – Adapting Nursing Facilities and Homes for New Approaches in Care
Jeannette Steeves, Ph.D., Jeannette Steeves Interiors

Environmental Materials
Eugene Lisa, vice president of sales and marketing, VERDE Interior Products

ASID Portfolio and Resume Review

Students should take full advantage of this exceptional event with top interior designers. ASID professionals will be available to share their expertise as they assist attendees with portfolio and resume suggestions in one-on-one review sessions. This is a valuable opportunity to learn from leading industry professionals and it serves as a fantastic venue for networking!
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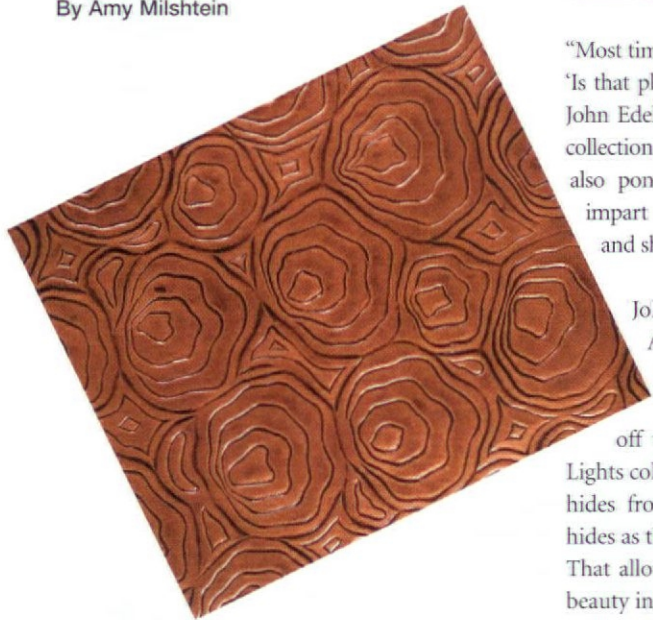
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Edelman's City Lights collection turns patent leather into patent pleasure with its shine, glamour, and luxurious hand

By Amy Milshtein



It takes just one look on the runways or in the fashion magazines to see that patent leather is big. Its eye-catching shine coupled with its nostalgic reminiscence of childhood make the material playful, sophisticated, sexy, and innocent all at the same time. Bringing this special leather to upholstery provides a unique challenge, one that Edelman Leather took on with its new City Lights collection.

"Most times, you look at patent leather and wonder, 'Is that plastic or leather?'" says Edelman president John Edelman. "When you look at the City Lights collection you just say, 'What nice leather!'" You may also ponder how Edelman Leather managed to impart such shine and still retain a supple hand and show so much grain in this new collection.

John Edelman gives full credit to his father, Arthur. "He's a genius in leather, and he obsessed over the project for about six months," he reports. The obsession paid off with a proprietary "recipe" for the City Lights collection. The process starts with full-grain hides from German bulls. Edelman touts these hides as the "cleanest, most scar-free hides around. That allows us to accentuate the leather's natural beauty instead of hiding flaws and defects."


Then, the hard work begins: Each hide is hand rubbed and dyed over a three-and-a-half-hour period. While traditional patent leather gets its shine from a polyurethane top coat, City Lights takes no such short cuts. Here, the recipe calls for a

proprietary clear dye that is sprayed on and then ironed into the leather. Layer after layer of this dye melted into the leather gives City Lights its depth, soft hand, and unmistakable look.

City Lights is available in five prints and eight colorways, while City Lights Smoothie, an unembossed option, comes in four colorways. Edelman insists that these collections are only a starting point. "Everything is customizable," he says. "Options really are unlimited."

So far reaction remains strong for City Lights. It has been installed in interiors as diverse as private airplanes, corporate offices, hotels, and restaurants. "It works on as an accent wall or on bar stools," reports Edelman. "We've had a 300-seat, volume restaurant in Las Vegas use it."

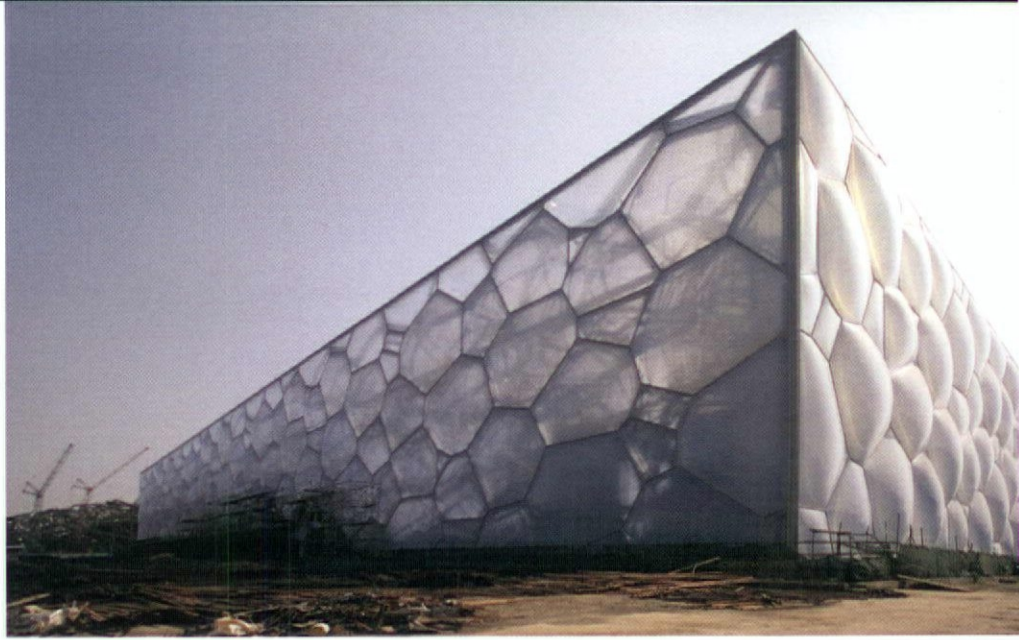
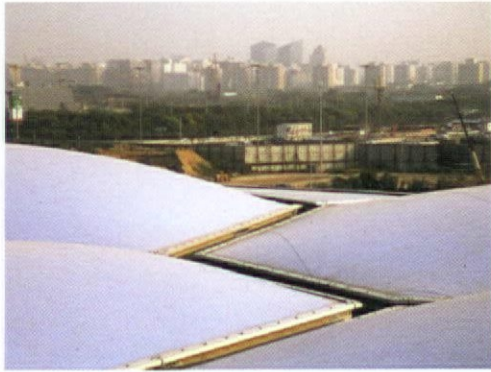
The product is even showing up in unexpected places—like healthcare. "The hides are infused with anti-microbial, anti-fungal, and stain-resistant properties," continues Edelman. "So they are easy to clean and perfect for assisted living facilities or high-end healthcare applications."

They also work well for projects vying for a LEED certification. As the product is Green Guard Certified, it is guaranteed not to off-gas. "You can't pigeonhole this product," insists Edelman. "The reaction has been so strong from all different markets." Seems like a little gloss goes a long way—no matter where.  Circle No. 201



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material



The National Aquatic Center (above and left) in Beijing, designed by Peddle Thorp Walker. Photos by Ben McMillan.

on the bubble

Although it's more than 30 years old, the flexible plastic ETFE is set to make a big splash in 2008

By Katie Weeks

Medal-winning athletes and their record-breaking achievements won't be the only entity in the spotlight during the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games next summer. Architecturally minded spectators also may be marveling over the structures incorporating a fluoropolymer called ethylene-tetrafluoroethylene (or ETFE).

More than 30 years old, ETFE originally was developed by DuPont for NASA for use as insulation. It wasn't until the late 1990s, however, that the architectural community began experimenting with it. While DuPont still produces ETFE under the name Tefzel® ETFE, several other manufacturers offer ETFE-based products. Bermen, Germany-based Vector Foiltec, a manufacturer specializing in ETFE, incorporates the material in its Texlon Foil System, a cladding and roofing system that anchors ETFE-layered panels on aluminum frames. In many cases, the panels are inflated into bubble-like arcs. One of the biggest showcases appeared in 2000 with the unveiling of the Eden Project in Cornwall, England, an environmental complex featuring two giant conservatories, designed by Grimshaw Architects.

As cladding, ETFE is lighter and more flexible than normal glazing and can be used in larger spans. The material's non-stick properties allow for easy cleanability, and although it is more transparent than glass, different layers can be used to incorporate shading. In 2006, for example, Swiss architects Herzog and de Meuron employed the flexible polymer in the walls of the Allianz Arena in Munich, which hosted the 2006 World Cup. The transparent façade allowed lighting elements within to display combinations of red, white, and blue in homage to the home teams.

It's the upcoming year, however, that may be ETFE's moment to shine. As construction progresses for the Beijing Olympics, it seems most appropriate that the Aquatics Center, known as the Water Cube, will showcase a blue-tinted, bubbled façade employing more than 100,000 sq. m. of ETFE foils. Designed by the Australian architecture firm Peddle Thorp Walker (PTW), in conjunction with Australian engineering firm Ove Arup, the facility will host swimming, diving, and water polo events. In addition to providing a dynamic face to the building, ETFE also contributes to the mechanical side: The energy captured by the greenhouse properties of the ETFE foils will be used to help heat the venue. Also set to debut in 2008 is Khan Shatry Entertainment Center, a 1,076,000-sq.-ft. tent-shaped recreational complex in Kazakhstan, designed by Foster + Partners, that features a ETFE spire as its defining element. ☐



Khan Shatry Entertainment Centre in Kazakhstan, designed by Foster + Partners.



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conquering with cuisine

Restaurants can serve as urban catalysts

By Tim Murphy

Nothing draws people like the good-looking set having a good time. And whether it's an aging neighborhood street, a transitional red light district, or even an emerging suburb, high-quality restaurants often are catalysts for urban transformation.

Chestnut Street in San Francisco's Marina neighborhood traditionally focused on serving the retail needs of its local residents, but it had become stale over the last decade. While safe, the area was no longer a destination until recently when new carefully designed restaurants began drawing people again. The infusion of upscale dining has provoked a land rush of other food service, as well as a broader range of upscale retail tenants. Architecture TM recently completed two casual yet thoughtfully designed restaurants in the area. Laiola, which serves Spanish-Californian cuisine, took over its space from a pizza chain. The copper bar and rosewood case-work communicate quality, but not haute cuisine. Down the street, behind an Art Deco façade, Mamacita provides a theatrical dining room for gourmet Mexican dining. Now that new dining is attracting crowds, prominent national retailers are adding to the momentum. Apple has recently negotiated a hugely complicated deal to position a retail store on Chestnut Street, and Pottery Barn is premiering its new look a few doors away.

In San Francisco's Tenderloin district, once a gritty neighborhood to avoid, upscale bars and speakeasies such as Rye, Swig, and Bourbon & Branch are bringing in young and hip foot traffic. Architecture TM also designed The Ambassador, with its diamond tufted upholstery and faux glamorous chandeliers, as a chic and popular Rat Pack throwback that provides stylish see-

Laiola (left)





Concept for lounge at Gaylord Suites (above)
The Ambassador (right)



and-be-seen drinking and dining space for design-conscious young professionals. Cortez in Hotel Adagio, was designed by artist Michael Brennan, to be a hip hangout that pulls in the locals and tourists alike, extending the pre-theater dining options one more block into the Tenderloin. And with Gaylord Suites' partnering with a new lounge/restaurant entrepreneur to develop street-level dining even further west, cuisine and its consequences will likely soon penetrate the heart of the neighborhood.

Great restaurants can be responsible for even more dramatic neighborhood improvements. In the mid '90s when a private San Francisco coffee roastery expanded into food service, the Universal Café, designed by Jeff and Larissa Sand (an industrial designer and architect respectively), became the place for young and stylish urbanites to gather, despite its remote location in the heart of an underused industrial zone with unreliable street lighting. More restaurants followed, then new high-density loft style housing, then more restaurants. Drug trafficking moved out, and now the area is a safe and hip neighborhood.

And it's not only traditional urban environments that benefit from innovative dining experiences. Roseville, Calif., a bedroom community for Sacramento, is developing new restaurants with urban style. Roseville and other affluent suburbs are demanding restaurants that could compete with New York or Las Vegas in terms of visual drama and gourmet quality. They

are consciously resisting the big-box feel found in many suburban locales. Roseville's demographic has a lower cost of living than the San Francisco Bay area combined with relatively large amounts of disposable income. However, unlike their urban counterparts these new suburban restaurants are not so limited by size as they are in the city.

For example, the 9,000 sq. ft. Crush 29 was designed by BCV Architects to be a casual wine-and-dine destination with a wine list of more than 200 selections, dramatic fireplaces, and a round bar that makes everyone feel part of the action. Cena di Mare, scheduled to open in summer 2008, will be one of California's most lavish new restaurants. Designed by Architecture TM, the 8,000 sq. ft. dining fantasy will overlook a lake, with sweeping forms that suggest the dynamic qualities and effects of water, while another restaurant in Roseville, Nikko, will include a sushi bar, a restaurant, ultra-lounge, and swimming pool, all punctuated by over-scaled Asian inspired sculptures.

All of this activity suggests that architects and designers have both an opportunity and a challenge to work with constrained sites in urban settings and to design appropriate responses in growing suburban settings in order to harness the potential impact that restaurants and clubs can bring to a community. This is a place where design is literally transformative. ☐

Tim Murphy is the founder of Architecture TM, based in San Francisco.

greening the hotel of tomorrow

Issues on the future of sustainable design in hospitality

By Ariane Steinbeck

Overall, the A&D community is abuzz with green-themed design conferences, and the sustainability movement is continuing to gain traction in the hospitality industry. This trend is evidenced by the importance that even more investment-oriented hotel conferences—such as the most recent Hotel Investment Conference Asia Pacific (HICAP) held in Hong Kong this past October—place on the subject of “green.” HICAP gave significant air-time on this topic and numerous panels and roundtables discussed green trends. Is “green” here to stay? We certainly believe so.

The hotel industry is acutely aware that it has to give the customer what he demands. Savvy hospitality designers then must anticipate the future needs of their customers' guests. As increasingly more hotel guests realize the ecological footprint that is being left by their consumer choice, it places the hotel designer at a unique advantage to lead the path to greener hotels worldwide. A survey by TripAdvisor® in April confirmed that a significant number of guests actually are prepared to spend more to stay at an eco-friendly property. This, coupled with incentives and directives for hotel developers that may be of a legislative, financial, and regulatory nature, solidify that the future of hotel design is green. Today, the design professional is in a unique position, as the designer's knowledge of green topics very likely exceeds that of our developer clients, and we can truly lead the charge on this issue.

Hotels can be considered some of the most inefficient buildings around. Sheets and towels get changed every day. Lights are constantly on in spaces that are not occupied. Air conditioners run at full power in unoccupied rooms to assure comfort upon the guest's arrival. Grounds are watered incessantly to provide green oases in desert climates. Masses of cleaning products are used to provide a hygienic albeit not necessarily healthy environment. Food staff travels thousands of miles to anticipate every conceivable gustatory delight. And we're not even counting the thousands of gallons of fuel that it takes for the guest to get there...



The Gettys Group developed Meeting 2.0: the next generation of virtual business, which reduces the need for non-essential business travel. (Photo by Kevin Richards.)

So what can a hotel designer do to create a greener venue? And how green is green, really? Unfortunately, no universally accepted, global standard exists for hotels yet. However, there are many agencies and organizations that help guide the path to greener design, such as EU ECO-LABEL in the European Union; GREEN GLOBE in Australia, New Zealand, and Asia; BREEAM in the UK; Green Leaf (Canada) and Green Leaf (Thailand and ASEAN); and ECOTEL® and LEED in the United States.

Stateside, the most rigorous program is LEED. However, unless your client is fully committed from the project's onset to attain LEED certification, the road to green may be quite difficult. Yet there are plenty of

responsible choices the designer can avail their clients even if LEED certification is not pursued.

First of all, the green approach to a project needs to be “intrinsic,” meaning that it needs to be adopted from the developer to the management and down to the staff of the hotel. The obvious choices the interior designer and architect can make are related to energy conservation and water consumption/conservation, indoor air quality, and sustainability of building materials, furnishings, and finishes. Hotel operations can advance this path by continued focus on responsible energy and water use, ecological preservation, waste management, and community involvement.

Green furnishing and finishes choices have increased dramatically over the last two years. If we want better choices for tomorrow, the design community must insist on better and more offerings from all our suppliers. The ultimate aim is to provide to our clients eco-embedded options, an eco-friendly alternative for most products we specify. Thus, once installed, the user can be green with very little effort on his part and feel good about spending money in our client's projects.

Since wide availability of eco-embedded options in every product category is far from reality today, Gettys has joined *Hospitality Design* magazine to lead the

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green



Rate and See: The future of lodging rates could be tied to energy consumption. (Photo by Kevin Richards.)

Hotel of Tomorrow™ (H.O.T.) project. As a think tank, H.O.T. seeks to conceptualize the future of the hospitality industry and foster the spirit of innovation through collaboration. More than 40 suppliers, designers, architects, industry consultants, and hotel companies came together to ideate on issues concerning trends in the hospitality industry, and, not surprisingly, “renewable resources” was one of the key trends identified by the group three years ago. The 2007 ideation session focused exclusively on this subject.

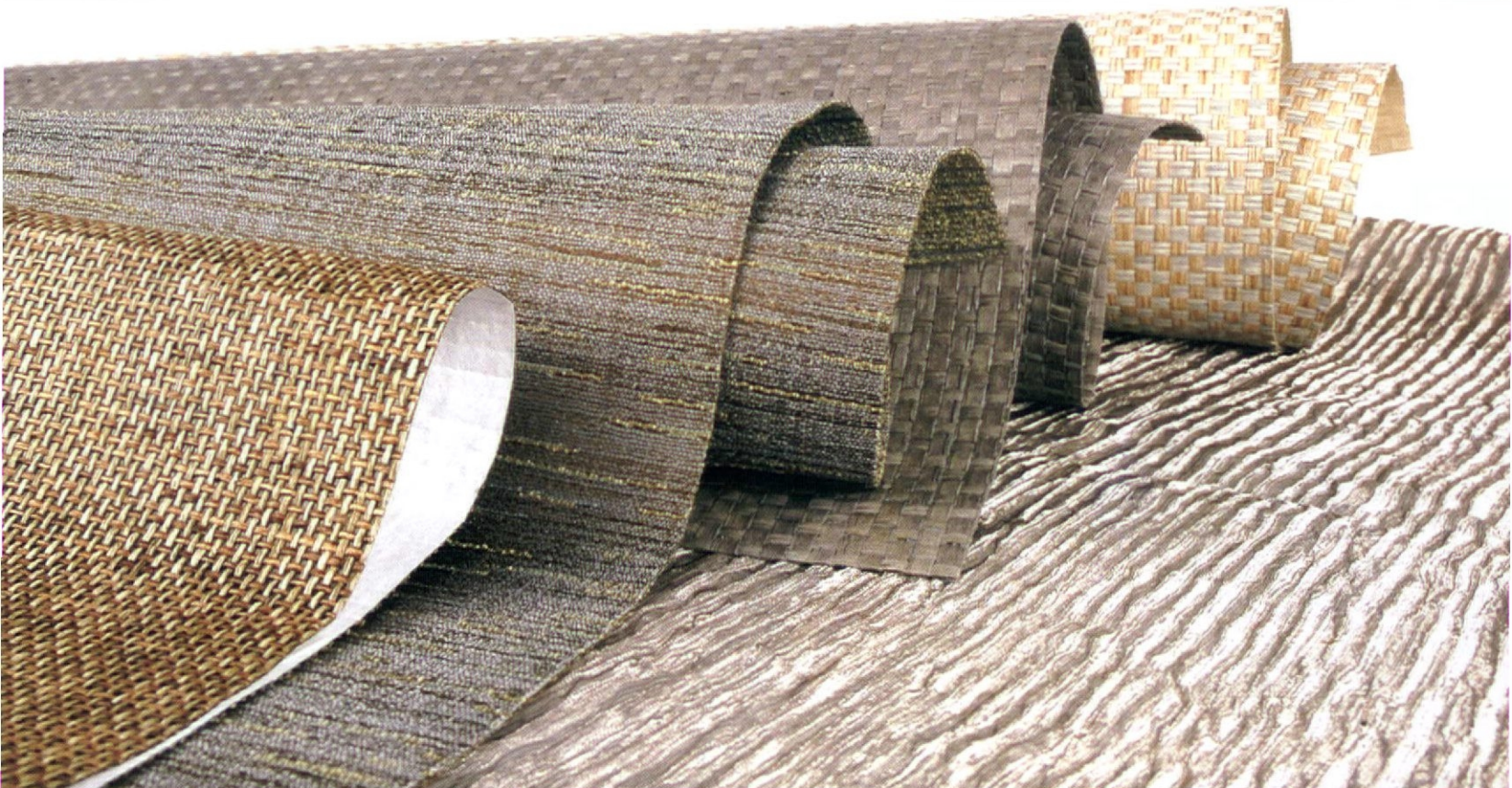
Most of the concepts developed out of this session’s ideas are outright futuristic and purposefully so. We aim to stretch our imagination to perhaps spur the development of truly innovative products and services. We envisioned Meeting 2.0, a more effective virtual and interactive conferencing environment, reducing the need for non-essential travel in our flattened world. Will we see Crowd Farming incorporated into our busy hotel lobbies, where we can harness the energy of compression generated by people walking across our floors? Will we use luggage that can capture and store energy of the wheel rotations to charge our ever increasing portable electronic devices without having to find a conventional electrical outlet? We would like to specify a Rate & See, a more effective and informational guestroom door system that could adjust the room rates according to the energy used in the room.

The need to conserve resources and preserve our planet has become obvious. The demand for products to satisfy this need is ever increasing, but the specifications we should be making in our work is our continued responsibility. ☐

A senior vice president and founding partner of Gettys, Ariane Steinbeck, IIDA, has nearly 20 years of experience in hotel operations, hospitality design, and architecture. In 2008, she will head up Gettys’ new Hong Kong office as managing director. She is a member of the Cornell Hotel Society and previously served as executive vice president of the Network of Executive Women in Hospitality (NEWH), Chicago Chapter.

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Personal butler service is just one amenity in today's luxury resort

By Linda Burnett



Many of us might not feel like we're getting any richer, with the housing sub-prime fallout and credit crunch, but globally the story is very different. Plenty of people are flush with cash around the world, and some are popping up where least expected (though probably not in your living room). In China alone there are a reported 106 billionaires, up from 15 in 2006 and zero in 2005. Talk about a big jump in net worth. In Russia, the number of billionaires totals 53, and in India it's now 36. Explosive global wealth means more people have time to travel and can afford luxury tastes, which in turn means higher expectations for hotel amenities. Lucky for this growing class of consumers, the options for higher-end vacationing seem to be expanding, with five-star resorts in development everywhere from Palm Springs to the Middle East. And these resorts are meant to be exclusive. In Dubai, the infamous 1,000-ft.-tall Burj Al Arab flaunts the fact that its suites go for between \$1,770 and \$10,850 per night. That's not chump change.

With gold and marble and record-breaking heights, resorts today aren't just trying to outdo each other; they want to outdo themselves. The Burj Al Arab describes itself as a seven-star hotel, even though the most number of stars a hotel can get from Mobil is five stars. Many hotels and resorts are pushing the definition of what it means to be categorized as "luxury." So what does it mean to exceed the five-star rating? "It suggests something more than what's typically expected," explains Guy Courtney, a design principle with Dallas-based Wilson & Associates. "It's more of a marketing idea or an indication that there's no limit in service. Luxury is about the services and not just the facilities." Some of those services might include a personal valet or butler whom a guest may call at any time for a range of requests from renting a Ferrari to delivering a new suit.

In some ways, the location itself can be considered a luxury service. Location is essential for a luxury resort so that visitors feel their experiences are special and beyond what they could have in their normal lives, even if those lives are already privileged. "Destination works on the subconscious, from the time they get off the airplane to how they get to the property, how they are greeted, and the landscape they see," says Bill Reed, vice president at WAT&G in Seattle, who suggests

The striking architectural theme at the Traiteur restaurant at the Park Hyatt Dubai (left), designed by Wilson & Associates, is a "theatrical super yacht," reinforced with soaring, curved-timber ceiling beams and an interior backdrop of sail shapes. Guestroom suites at the Four Seasons Hong Kong (above), by Willson & Associates, are sleek and contemporary with architectural lines inspired by Art Deco detailing, yet tailored tones and textures blend harmoniously. (Photos by Michael Wilson.)



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With hotel bathrooms gaining significant square footage, guests bathe in the lap of luxury in The Watergate Hotel (left), in Washington D.C., designed by ForresterPerkins. (Photo by Hoachlander Davis Photography). WAT&G designed the 192 room 5-star hotel at The Lake Resort in Vilamoura (above) to blend elements of Portugal's rich history with contemporary crafts and culture in a setting around a picturesque lake amid landscaped gardens.

that even a brief drive through a neighboring poverty-stricken or industrial area is enough to dampen a visit and break the illusion of complete luxury. "What you see when you get there and leave is part of the first and last impression," he adds

In the case of the Mandarin Oriental in Bangkok, which has undergone several renovations, guests must take a water taxi across the river to get to the spa, affording them a beautiful view from a calm setting and creating a special experience in and of itself. To Stephen Perkins, principle at ForresterPerkins in Dallas, this kind of service is very typical of the Asian model of luxury hotels, "particularly the spa," he says. "It's the Asian model that the entire world wants to emulate."


But aside from the superior service, there are few telltale signs to define what exactly is a luxury resort, whether that be validated with the Triple A 3-diamond, the Mobil 5, or the phantom, subjective 6- or 7-star rating. "When you talk about guestrooms, the important thing today is the bathroom," says Deborah Forrester, principle at ForresterPerkins. "More square footage is being devoted to the bath area, and the line between that personal space and the bedroom is being blurred. So the minimal criteria for a luxury bathroom are a large shower, separate toilet room, and a visual connection between the bathroom and the rest of the room." Some bathrooms even have a door that opens onto a terrace. And let's not forget the tub. No ordinary shallow tubs-for-one please. Luxury means a Japanese soaking bath or a Jacuzzi.

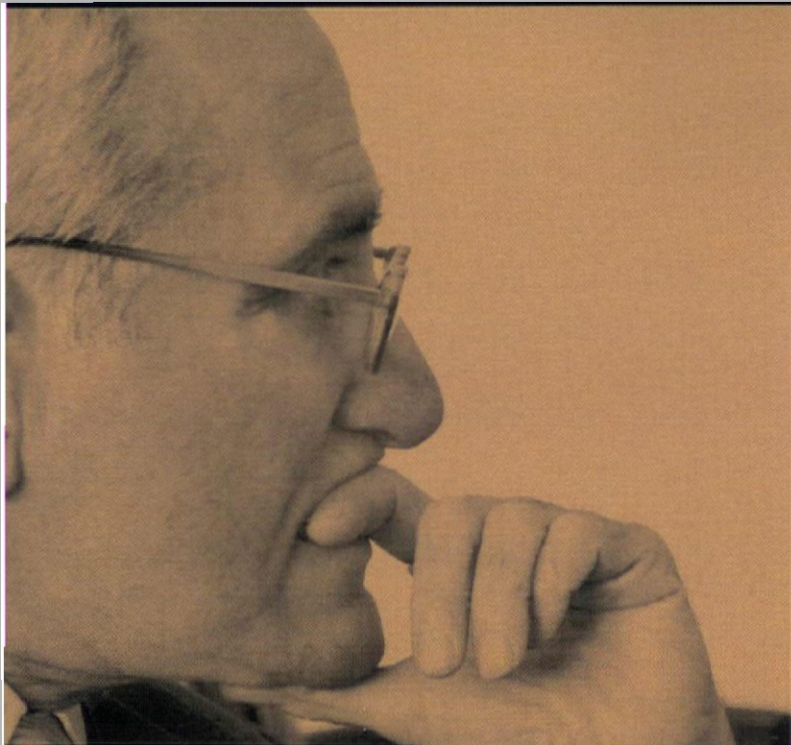
To create a memorable experience, most luxury resorts provide as much space as possible, which means eliminating the borders between outside and inside. "We

often carry finishes from the guestroom to the terrace to give a sense that you're outside, and the balcony might include a living space or doors to open so that it has a living room effect," says Courtney. High ceilings and ample floor area also add to the subconscious effect of having a grand, special space.

Today's luxury resorts aim for an authentic experience that matches the often exotic and remote locale. The point is to "reflect the local culture, where authenticity is interpreted and implied," says Reed. "Now there's an interpretive view of the indigenous area with artifacts in the interior that remind you of where you are." There's nothing formulaic with today's luxury resorts; all aspects of the design from site planning to the menu involve specificity of time and place.

In some cases, there might not be much local history or culture, but designers' attempt to create a sense of place. With the privately owned Fregate Islands in the Seychelles in the Indian Ocean, an island of only 30 inhabitants, Wilson & Associates' plan was to create its own story with the 16 villas it designed. "We developed a story of trade routes between Africa and India and drew upon it in the design," says Courtney. "We stretched the idea of history while drawing on some aspect of the region's history."

Whether it be a private pool off the guestroom or a butler ready to arrange a rooftop dinner for two, today's luxury resorts offer more than picture perfect experiences. Every moment must be aspirational. Certainly that's what people want, and so do the developers. Trump, Armani, and Versace are all planning luxury resorts. And that's no surprise. 



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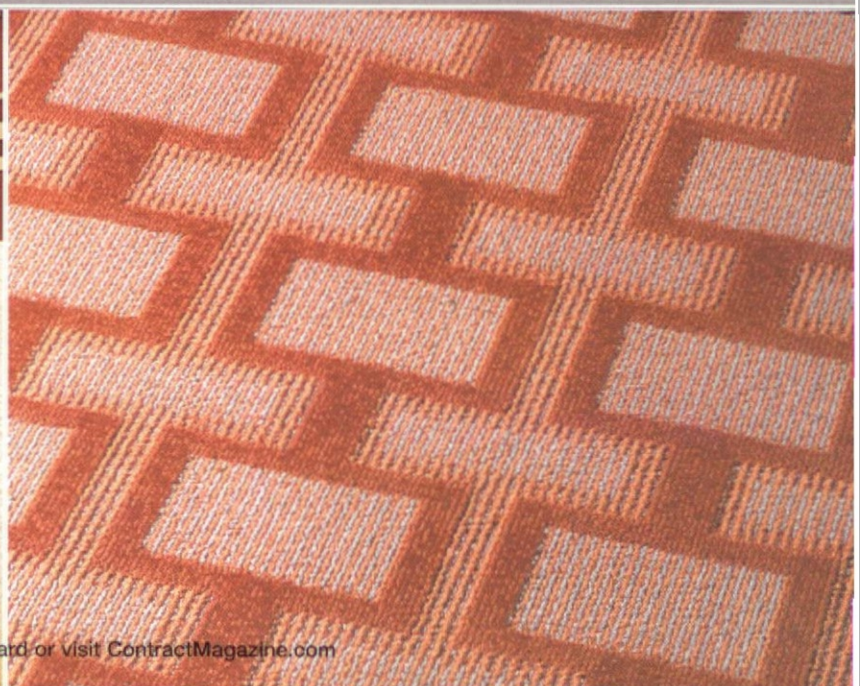
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rooms to grow

Growth may have slowed a bit in the hospitality sector, but the pros seem bullish on the industry both here and abroad

By Amy Milshtein

Despite challenges facing the entire economy, the hospitality industry remains surprisingly strong. “The industry is worth an estimated \$135 to \$140 billion a year in room revenue alone,” reports Glenn Withiam, executive editor of the *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, Cornell University School of Hotel Administration. “That’s without the food and beverage service. And that’s billion with a B.”

Yet that “billion with a B” still reflects a bit of a slump from the vigorous rebound the industry enjoyed after the last major downturn in 2001. “I think we’re spoiled from that time,” theorizes Joe McNerney, president and CEO, American Hotel & Lodging Educational Foundation. “Some people suppose the business will flatten out in the coming years, but others are more optimistic.”

Many factors could force a flattening. The credit crunch dogging the housing market has many concerned. “People seem to be waiting for the other shoe to drop, and deals have been put on hold,” says Brad Garner, vice president, Smith Travel Research. “But ultimately this will be good for the supply pipeline. Financing contracts will be crisper and tighter.”

True, the same construction delays facing the entire building industry, like land costs and materials scarcity, plague the hospitality market, as well. But one economic factor seems to play little in the traveler’s desire to get out there. “People seem unfazed by the fluctuations in gas prices,” says Withiam. “Issues like job pressures may force people to cut a vacation short, but fuel costs don’t seem to play a huge role.”

Data from Smith Travel Research shows that, for the top 25 markets, occupancy percentages virtually stayed the same from August 2006 to August 2007, but Average Daily Rates (ADR) rose 6.8 percent, while Revenue per Available Room (RevPAR) also rose 7 percent. Supply and demand appear equalized with both categories up for the year to date 1.2 percent and 1.3 percent respectively.

Projects in the pipeline seem to move slower, due to difficulty in completing construction. Yet Garner predicts that, in some markets, there may be too much product in 2009 or 2010. “On the other hand, some markets can never have too many rooms,” he says. “Places like Washington, D.C., or New York City, where hotels were converted into condos or corporate housing, still need rooms. If they are running at 85 percent to 90 percent occupancy rates that implies that some days are probably sold out.”

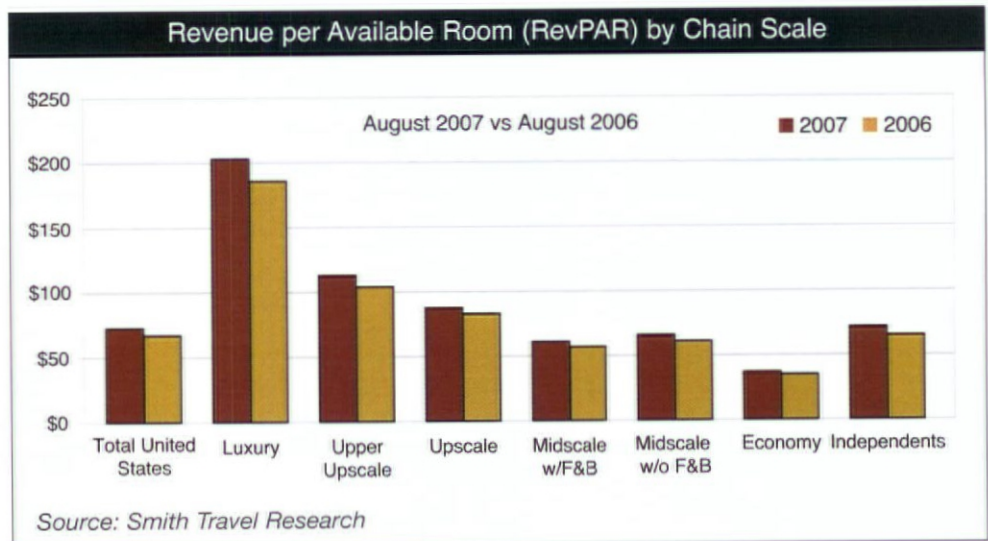
Overseas the story is similar. ADRs and RevPARs are up in Asia, Europe, and the Middle East/Africa according to Smith Travel Research. Northeastern Asia posted enormous advances with a 23.5 percent growth in ADR and 21.4 percent gain in RevPAR. “Obviously the Chinese market is huge,” says McNerney. “Over the years I’ve seen the city of Macau transform from a sleepy fishing village to a gaming powerhouse.” Look to the newly opened Venetian Macao hotel for proof. It’s the world’s second largest building housing the world’s largest casino.

The Middle East is another hot spot for the hotel industry. Half year results from the HotelBenchmark™ Survey by Deloitte show the Middle East

hotel market continuing to post double digit growth for the fourth consecutive year—with RevPAR increasing 13.7 percent. Location, however, is everything. Dubai tops the scales at a RevPAR of \$255 with Luxor coming in at just \$24.

No matter where the room is, demand for certain amenities remains the same. “The ‘bed wars’ are over and won,” reports McNerney, “and today’s rooms have more pillows than they know what to do with.” So what do travelers demand in their room? “Remember the days when motels advertised ‘free color TV?’” asks Withiam. “Now I think you could build a room without a TV or a phone. Just offer Wi-Fi and a top-of-the-line screen to plug in your laptop so you can watch what you rented on Netflix.”

McNerney agrees. “We’ve done more research on what travelers want in the last five years than over the previous 40,” he says. “Younger travelers, from ages 22 to 35, need all the high-tech bells and whistles—flat-screen TVs, docking stations for iPods and other electronics.” And what about that old, reliable profit center—the telephone? “Forget it,” he continues. “Who touches the hotel phone anymore unless it’s for a wake-up call?” ☐

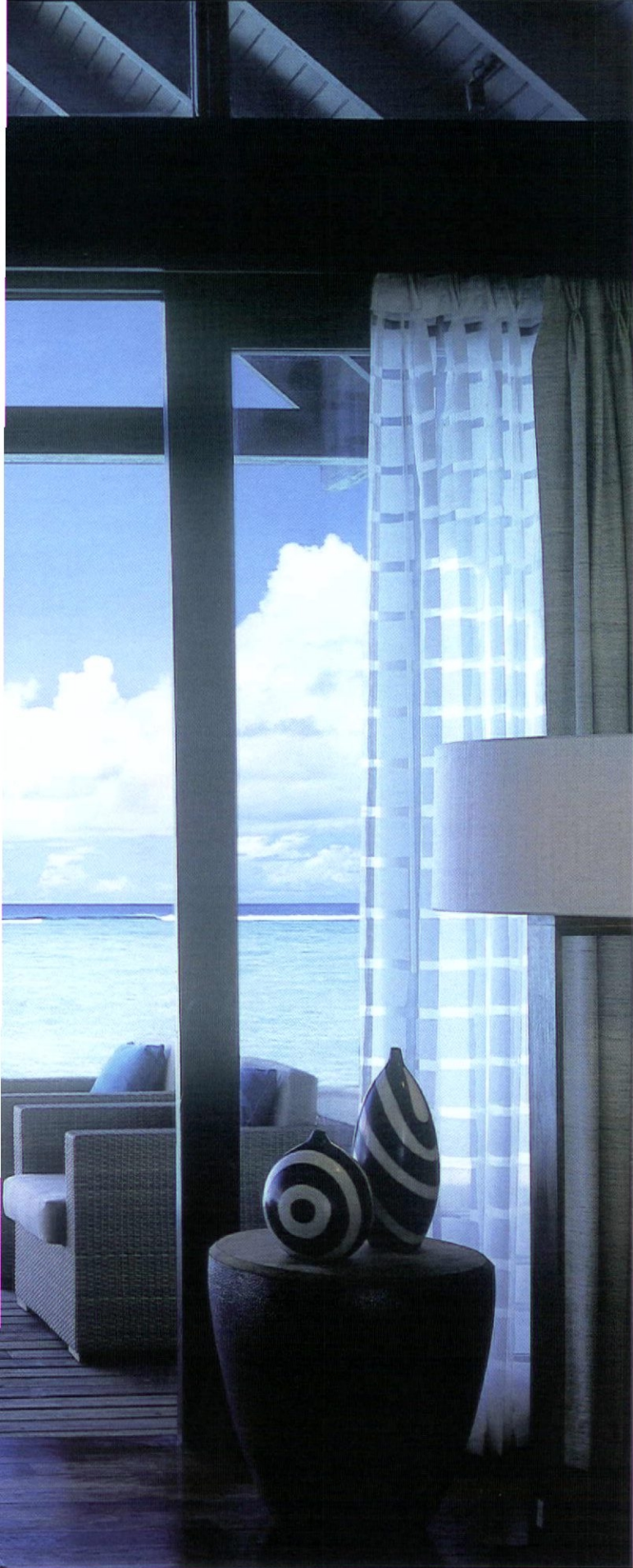




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exotic essentials

James Park Associates gives a new look to Taj Exotica Resort & Spa in the Maldives after the devastating 2004 tsunami

By Jean Nayar
Photography courtesy of Taj Exotica Resort and Spa

Set on Emboodhu Finolhu, a tiny island off the southern tip of India (above), Taj Exotica Resort & Spa Maldives offers a secluded place for guests to find healing and harmony. Teak flooring, a vaulted roof, and custom contemporary furnishings in the living room of the Rehendi suite (left) create casual elegance.



For anyone traveling a path toward inner peace, a visit to Emboodhu Finolhu, one of the many islands of the Maldives off the southern tip of India, should be an essential stop on the journey. There, seekers of healing and harmony will find the Taj Exotica Resort & Spa Maldives, where they can indulge in beauty rituals and wellness practices rooted in Indian royal healing therapies as well as the ancient Indian system of holistic healthcare known as *ayurveda*. Best of all, these age-old healing techniques are delivered in an understated setting that merges the relaxed spirit of island life with the modern amenities of a contemporary luxury resort.

Designed by the Singapore-based design firm James Park Associates (JPA) and opened early last year, the Taj Exotica Resort & Spa Maldives is one of several new resort and spa facilities specifically tailored to support the signature treatments exclusive to the Taj brand. Common to all Taj spas, treatment rooms are innovative spaces that blend the latest trends in spa design with elements that augment the practice of classic Indian therapies—such as *sammatta*, a balancing treatment involving the use of essential oils, or *vishuddi*, a detoxifying treatment that includes a body wrap with natural herbs.

“A signature feature of the Taj Exotica Resort & Spa Maldives,” notes Samir Patel, vice president of spa operations and development for Taj Hotels, “is the Alepa Pavilion Suite, which was specially created as a stage post for the spectacular experience of *alepa*, a unique and engaging treatment that involves anointing oneself with special preparations of healing herbs and oils.”

The bedroom in the Rehendi suite (above) features a massive teak headboard carved in a fish-scale pattern. Silk pillows and a pashmina throw add visual drama and comfortable warmth. A split-level suite (opposite) opens up to a deck overlooking the beach, while bathrooms in lagoon villas (right) gaze out to the crystal blue sea.



design



The Alepa Pavilion, also known as the Royal Bathing Pavilion, is one of about a dozen signature treatment spaces comprising the spa facilities, which are clustered at one end of the small skinny island. Outside this pavilion, a rectangular platform of solid sandstone surrounded by pebbles sits atop a teak sun deck open to the sky. In the center of the platform, a hand-carved sandstone drum table supports bowls of herbal treatment preparations intended to cover the body. Contoured beds, which are temperature controlled by an internal water-heating system and located at the edge of the deck, allow spa-goers to evenly bake in the benefits of the treatment while taking in views of the endless sea.

Like the spa rooms, the guest villas and public spaces were designed with natural materials and incorporate local building techniques that graciously blend with the setting. "The island is small—you can walk from end to end in 10 minutes—so we wanted the ambience to be elegant but casual," says lead architect David Edwards. "The villas have an almost rustic quality with thatched roofs made from layers of native fungi leaves—they're extremely comfortable and usable, and nothing is too precious about their design."

Though their ambience is relaxed, the resort's 62 villas and suites were also designed to offer a sense of privacy and luxury. Accommodations also include generous duplex structures directly on the beach with private sit-out spaces, courtyard gardens, plunge pools, tropical outdoor showers, and private treatment rooms. There are also deluxe lagoon villas, which are built on stilts over the water around a leaf-shaped jetty that extends from the



The sit-out area of the Rehendi presidential suite (opposite top) is shaded by a thatched roof made of local fungi leaves. The adjoining gazebo overlooks the sea on one side and a private infinity plunge pool on the other (opposite bottom). Moorish-inspired custom bronze lanterns echo the local design vernacular. A teak sun deck outside the deluxe lagoon villa features poolside, contoured sunbathing beds (right). Spa facilities, including this couples treatment room that overlooks the sea (below), are set at the opposite end of the island from the guest accommodations.





lagoon side of the island. The most magnificent of these is the Rehendi presidential suite, a 450-sq.-m. sanctuary with a vaulted living room, luxurious bedroom, and a private fresh-water infinity plunge pool located at the tip of the jetty. All guest spaces feature teak and merbau wood furnishings and floors, sisal carpets, and marble bathrooms.

The designers took an equally restrained approach in the resort's restaurants and bar, incorporating subtle nautical motifs and infusing accents with Islamic influences. (Buddhism dominated the Maldives for several hundred years until the 12th century, when the atolls converted to Islam.) A teak bar in the sunset lounge was inspired by boat building techniques and carved like the hull of a ship, while custom bronze lanterns around a private dining pavilion feature Moorish patterns, and a stunning chandelier made of capiz shell highlights the fine dining restaurant. Embraced by the sand and sea, the palettes in these spaces were selected to harmonize with the surroundings, and lighting is deliberately muted so that the natural environment can be fully admired. "The idea," says Edwards, "was to allow the guests to appreciate the outdoors—beautiful ocean vistas during the day and a romantic canopy of thousands of stars overhead at night." □

Taj Hotels rebuilt and renovated its two-year-old Maldivian resort almost from scratch after the 2004 tsunami. With spa facilities at one end and guest accommodation at the other end, guest villas surround a leaf-shaped jetty that extends from the middle (above). Interior designs and furnishings are inspired by Moorish influences, boat-building techniques, and the beach-side surroundings. A capiz shell chandelier casts a soft glow over the fine dining Mediterranean Restaurant (below).

who

Project: Taj Exotica Resort & Spa. *Client:* Taj Asia Limited. *Interior designer:* James Park Associates. *Project management:* Taj Projects Group. *Landscape consultant:* Wijaya Tribwana International. *Lighting consultant:* Lighting Design Associates; Anthony Corbett Associates. *Mechanical/electrical consultant:* SEMAC, India. *Kitchen consultant:* Vittal Rao. *Art consultant:* James Park Associates. *Photographer:* Taj Exotica Resort & Spa.

what

Flooring: Wood Doctor, You Design. *Rugs:* Trinetra Carpets. *Spa equipment:* Balnea. *Built-in cabinets:* Lalan Kumar. *Loose furnishings:* Ibal Designs. *Upholstery, drapery:* Maharam, Zimmer and Rohde, Bruce Goold Fabrics, Jagdish Store, Aerolux, Seasons Furnishings. *Blinds:* Aerolux. *Lighting:* Ibal Designs, Kapoor Lampshades, Design Studio. *Artwork:* Poonam Sarin, Venu Juneja. *Accessories:* Ibal Designs, Design Unit, Bali Connection, Crafters.

where

Location: Male, Maldives.





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design





mix appeal

An artful mix of Japanese culture with local Indonesian style makes the new Seibu flagship store in Jakarta a handsome statement in luxury retailing

By Celia Ying
Photography by Stefanus Pakan

The 21,000 sq.-m. store is centered around a five-story etched glass, chrome, and mirror atrium (opposite), designed with cantilevered stages that showcase custom displays and visual merchandising. Abundant use of cherry blossom patterns (above) throughout the interior creates a strong tie to Seibu's Japanese culture and heritage.

Globalization has become a topic of much discussion for its perceived impact on cultural diversity. Many worry that international entertainment companies are shaping the perceptions and even the way of life of customers around the globe, leading to the erosion of indigenous culture. But is this the only way to go? Apparently, the answer is no. When the first Seibu department store landed in Jakarta this past May, it demonstrated the genuine power of design in balancing corporate branding and local identity—resulting in a new attitude in luxury retailing.

With interiors by Seattle-based retail designer Callison, this Seibu flagship stands as the latest icon of luxury retailing, located on the historic central Grand Indonesia redevelopment site and central meeting point at the heart of Jakarta. As the largest international department store in the country, Seibu serves as the anchor for a five-level shopping, entertainment, luxury hotel, residential, and office complex with a total floor area of 21,000 sq. m.

Like other Seibu stores in the world, this flagship caters to the most fashion-forward, high-end customers. Due to the fact that this is also the first Seibu in Jakarta, the impression it makes on people in the region is especially important. "Since the client team had newly licensed the Seibu brand for Indonesia, they believed it was very important to create a distinctly different environment for this store as a flagship in a new market. Their goal was to create the highest level fashion store in Jakarta," explains Dawn A. Clark, principal at Callison.



According to Clark, the client also wanted to instill a distinctly Japanese feeling that reflects the Seibu brand. To achieve this objective, Callison developed a design theme that is strongly tied to Seibu's Japanese culture and heritage with finely detailed and layered installations of cherry blossoms as a symbolic reference. These beautifully vivid patterns can be found throughout the interiors, including in the marble floors along the main circulation of the store, etched glass surrounding the atrium, and wall and light boxes at various shopping counters. This delicate touch references the mellow experience of rambling around Japan during the cherry blossom festivals.

The department store is centered around an awe-inspiring, five-story, etched glass, chrome, and mirror atrium designed with cantilevered stages that showcase custom displays and visual merchandising. In contrast to the stark, structured aesthetic of other stores, Seibu Jakarta's design is rich in texture, color, pattern, and details that evoke an expressive and fashionable statement. The prominent use of details and patterns offers a theatrical environment for shoppers to explore, experience, and imagine.

Hand-cut marble, textured woodwork, and patterned wallcoverings made locally by skilled craftsmen allow for a truly unique realization of the design. Each of the six levels is designed independently of the other floors, while public spaces are tied together through rich, effusive displays, details, and finishes. Finely detailed, hand-carved, inlaid marble floors throughout the store are accented by handmade marble busts, carved wood statues, and custom leather pieces in each department.

A mixed use of refined materials and craftsmanship (opposite) achieves the goal of creating a softer, feminine, layered, and rich environment in contrast with the other stark, modern stores in Jakarta. Layers of detail and opulence create depth and dimension for the spacious interiors (right).





The materials used in Seibu Jakarta are layered for rich, nature-inspired patterning, translucency, and luminosity (left and below).



"We spent a lot of time working in collaboration with our clients and exploring the availability of materials and capabilities of the craftsman," says Clark. "The combination of Japanese cultural references with the craftsmanship and material availabilities in Indonesia allowed us to achieve a design that is unique to this location and could not be created anywhere else in the world."

In addition to the refined use of materials and craftsmanship, Clark also took pride in the space planning. "We created large openings in the structure to connect the ground floor to upper levels. Since the mall had no connection between floors, we felt this was critical in increasing visibility," she says. In terms of merchandising, the team went through many versions to create the right balance of brand shops, Seibu departments, and other visual displays. She continues, "The store has much more intensity around the visual display areas, creating a high level of lifestyle merchandising and personality."

The bold architecture and design, together with vivid fashion displays creates a destination where customers can enjoy an exclusive and memorable shopping experience. "Seibu Jakarta highlights the latest in store design and visual merchandising, making it a premier destination to launch new brands for the first time in this part of the world," notes Alan Thomson, director of operational and business development for Seibu. "The Seibu flagship is not just a store for the people of Jakarta, but for Indonesia and the entire south-east Asia region." ☐



who

Project: Seibu Department Store. *Client:* Panen Selaras Inti Buana. *Building architect:* RTKL. *Interior designer:* Callison Architecture. *M&E engineer:* Gradian Mitrakarsa. *Construction manager:* Daya Indria Permai. *Lighting consultant:* Lighting Design Alliance, LITAC. *Interior contractor:* Catur Griya Naradipa. *Andhikapura Perkasa, Wahana Mega Hastakarya. M&E contractor:* Hardi Agung Perkasa, Wisma Sarana Teknik. *Furniture supplier:* Citra Christophindo Mulia, Interindo Internusa, Gema Graha Sarana, Sari Jati Abhitama, Cipta Indah, Sinergi Lintas Kreasi, Abhirama Naracipta. *Photographer:* Stefanus Pakan.

what

Paint: Dulux, ICI, Kansai Paint. *Laminate:* Formica. *Marble:* Volacas, Cremanata/Gregorio Impala, Monalisa/D'Eurogress. *Wood floor:* Teka Parquet. *Wallpaper:* Designers Guild, Bukhara, Tres Tintas, Decorators Walk, USA, Cole&Son, Hick's Hexagon. *Ceiling/partition:* Gypsum Plasterboard, Jayaboard. *Carpet/carpet tile:* Masland, Durkan, Limoges Le Blanc.

where

Location: Jakarta, Indonesia. *Total floor area:* 21,322 sq. m. *No. of floors:* 5. *Cost:* \$8,333,333.



in the driver's seat

In its new ultra-luxe, jewel box showroom, designed by the Huntsman Architectural Group, Mercedes-Benz of San Francisco towers above the competition

By Holly Richmond
Photography by David Wakely

The street presence of the new Mercedes-Benz showroom (above) in San Francisco's South of Market area has served as a progressive beacon—a significant upgrade to the old industrial neighborhood. A three-story glass atrium (opposite) and cylindrical two-story corner window adorned with the Mercedes-Benz logo create an eye-catching backdrop for the company's luxury automobiles.

Is it a case of marketing genius, or simply a lucky break? However you look at it, the location of Mercedes-Benz of San Francisco's new showroom is a dream come true. Where better could intriguing, crystal clear advertising promoting luxury car sales be more effective than while driving? Drivers on the city's I-80 freeway—nearly 200,000 per day—enjoy a dramatic view of the high-end automaker's new two-story, glass-front, 73,400-sq.-ft. showroom, designed by San Francisco, Calif.-based Huntsman Architectural Group.

Mercedes-Benz took a risk in purchasing an existing 50,000-sq.-ft. structure in this industrial, decidedly un-suburban locale, directly off a freeway ramp in the city's South of Market area. Jim Chappell, president of the San Francisco Planning & Urban Research Association (SPUR), was behind the project from day one. Chappell's job at SPUR is to promote good development and quality architecture in San Francisco, and he believes the Mercedes-Benz project presents both qualities. "It's fantastic that this showroom has helped transform the neighborhood from an industrial wasteland to a burgeoning urban neighborhood. With the status of the Mercedes-Benz name behind it, you'd expect no less," he says.

While Mercedes-Benz of North America has a distinctive design standards program, the specifications presented were not intended for an urban, multi-



design



level showroom facility. Mark Harbick, AIA, IIDA, principal at Huntsman Architectural Group and the firm's national director of design, explains that after he and his team reviewed the standards, it was clear they would have to be modified. "The Mercedes-Benz design standards are geared toward stand-alone showrooms located in large parking lots in suburban America," he says. "We had the opposite situation, which we adapted to and capitalized on."

The urban quality of the site affected every aspect of the building's renovation and expansion. David Barsotti, president of Mercedes-Benz of San Francisco, explains that the new facility doubled the size of the automaker's previous location, and thus accommodates an inventory of 200 new and pre-owned vehicles, as well as ample car servicing space. "It was a priority to have our entire inventory inside to protect both our cars and our customers from the unpredictable San Francisco weather, and the building does this in a beautiful, yet functional way that perfectly fits in the neighborhood," says Barsotti. Because the building is located in this developing area, new customers walk in everyday. Barsotti adds, "The building has been so well received. The best comments are: 'This space is perfectly San Francisco;' and, 'The building makes me want to buy something.' These are things we are thrilled to hear!"

The site consists of four independent buildings constructed at various times from the 1920s through the 1960s, yet the goal was to create cohesion in a distinctly branded Mercedes-Benz way. While the project has a contemporary, industrial feeling, it is welcoming for the 50 to 100 clients each day, as

well as ideally suited for the 75 employees. The space in its entirety houses double-story showrooms, sales, administrative, service, and storage functions, all with an eye toward the company's image of luxury, refinement, and innovation in German engineering. "We designed a beautiful backdrop for the cars, not one that would overshadow them," notes Harbick.

Two-story glazed openings create a strong visual connection between the showrooms and the adjacent streetscape, which includes the cylindrical glass tower facing the freeway. Building B is a slender, three-story glass-enclosed atrium that connects Building A and Building C showrooms and serves as a media advertising wall, also viewable from the freeway. Building C also contains a state-of-the-art service department with six bays featuring in-ground car lifts that maintain such a clean aesthetic that they are in clear view for clients. Building D houses 10,000 sq. ft. of administrative services with approximately 30 offices, as well as the auto-parts department, which like the public spaces, features copious skylights and warm design touches. There are also two loan officer and sales manager offices in each showroom area, as well numerous sales associate workstations.

Low-profile, orange leather lounge seating (opposite) offers a pop of color within the project's neutral palette yet doesn't interfere with views of the cars. A walnut wood bench surrounding the water feature serves as another seating option and a tranquil respite from the bustling street. The reception desk (below left), located in a double-height space, features a flat screen monitor on a highly tooled white lacquered wall. The main sales floor (below right) features café tables that serve as spontaneous meeting areas. White porcelain tile floor and exposed ventilation give the space an industrial feel.





The neutral color palette expresses materials in “honest ways,” notes Harbick, including white porcelain tile floors, exposed wood beams and ductwork, and sandblasted concrete sheer walls. “We wanted to play up the contrast between the industrial qualities of the space and the luxurious refinement of the cars,” he adds. Another atypical aspect of the project is a water feature located within the main lounge area. Harbick remarks, “It provides white noise and tranquility for clients as they come in from the bustling street corner, and it also serves as home-base.” The low-profile lounge seating (as to not to interfere with the view of the cars) features Mercedes-Benz signature orange leather and sustainably harvested walnut wood. Harbick adds, “Sustainability became increasingly attractive to the client as the project progressed, so we incorporated as many green materials and features as possible.” The center three-story glass atrium serves as a heat stack that circulates air to keep energy costs low.

While Harbick, the associates of SPUR, and San Franciscans are delighted with the new Mercedes-Benz facility, it is Barsotti’s father, Jules Barsotti, who is probably the most overjoyed. “My father started Mercedes-Benz in San Francisco 45 years ago, and he remembers it as a time when houses in the Marina cost \$30,000, Giants tickets were \$1.00, and the toll on the Golden Gate Bridge was 25 cents. ‘Ah, the good old days,’ he says,” David Barsotti laughs. “My father loves the building and sees it as a home for Mercedes-Benz buyers for another 45 years.”





Private, glass-enclosed sales offices (opposite) offer clients a sense of privacy as well as full views of the cars. Indirect lighting adds sparkle to each automobile. The expansive volume of the four interconnected buildings (below) is capitalized on by incorporating double-height windows that offer views from one area to the next including multifloor showroom spaces. A skylight (left) brings in copious natural light.

who

Project, client: Mercedes-Benz of San Francisco. *Architect, interior designer:* Huntsman Architectural Group; Mark Harbick, AIA, principal in charge; Bert Ayers, Robin Bass, Rene Calara, Bill Hansel, Krystal Kaveny, Anita Rick, Edward Walters, design team. *Structural/plumbing engineer:* Murphy Burr Curry. *Mechanical engineer:* D/B Anderson Rowe Buckley. *Electrical engineer:* Decker Electric. *General contractor:* Plant Construction Company. *Lighting designer:* HE Banks + Associates. *Service Area Systems Consultant:* Air and Lube. *Photographer:* David Wakely.

what

Paint: Kelly Moore, Scuffmaster. *Dry wall:* USG. *Flooring:* Auto Stone, Epoxy, Forbo Linoleum, Interface. *Carpet/carpet tile:* Interface, Bentley Prince Street. *Ceiling:* Armstrong. *Lighting fixtures:* Zumtobel, Finelite. *Window frames:* CS Erectors. *Window treatments:* MechoShade. *Door hardware:* Schlage, Elmes. *Railing:* CR Lawrence. *Seating, tables, systems furniture, office furniture:* Steelcase. *Architectural woodworking, cabinet-making:* Commercial Casework. *Plumbing fixtures:* Kohler, Grohe.

where

Location: San Francisco, CA. *Total floor area:* 80,000 sq. ft. *No. of floors:* 3 (including rooftop parking). *Typical floor size:* 35,000 sq. ft.



design

the finest cut

Salus Surgical Group's Fort Lee and Short Hills outpatient ambulatory care facilities in New Jersey benefit from the Midas touch provided by Bush Interiors

By Amy Milshtein
Photography by Gray Crawford





Limestone floors, custom carpet, and sculpture set the reception area of the Short Hills facility apart (opposite). Smart cocktail or an epidural? Reception in the Fort Lee facility (above left) feels like an elegant hotel lobby. Fort Lee's private consultation room (above right) comforts patients and their families in a warm hug of salmon-colored wallcoverings and wood cabinetry.

You're not exactly sick, but you're not exactly well either. Yes, surgery has been ordered, but it's nothing, merely an outpatient procedure. Admittedly you're nervous; this is surgery, after all. But do you really have to go to the hospital—that big, impersonal building with all the truly sick people in it? For residents of northern New Jersey, the answer is no. Salus Surgical Group has constructed two outpatient ambulatory care facilities, one in Short Hills and the other in Fort Lee, with designs by Bush Interiors that pamper patients and staff equally while elevating the entire concept of healthcare.

One look at the Short Hills and Hudson Crossing Surgery Centers, and it becomes immediately apparent that these are not ordinary medical facilities. They are not even upgraded medical facilities. Instead, these spaces prevail beyond interiors with a residential feel right into interiors with a luxury hotel lounge essence.

While environs like these might be expected in a cosmetic surgery environment, neither Fort Lee nor Short Hills offers a nip/tuck. Instead the two centers facilitate necessary, day procedures like orthopedics, pain management, GI procedures, and more. This idea seems natural for Salus CEO Dr. Randy Rosen. "When I started my anesthesia and pain-management practice, I was known as the doctor with the beautiful office and no patients," he says. "But I wondered why this environment shouldn't be standard for general medicine."

Well, cost was one. Certainly interiors like this come at a premium. And insurance companies balk at paying for even the smallest out-of-the-ordinary claim. As it turns out, however, procedures at Short Hills and Fort Lee cost no more than the same procedures at a standard hospital. They can do this because they are not saddled with the traditional bureaucracies and excessive fees. "We aren't suffocated by administration here," continues Rosen. They also don't need expensive emergency rooms or the staffing requirements of a 24-hour facility.

With costs under control, designer Jamie Bush of Los Angeles-based Bush Interiors, was free to spend time and attention on every detail of the two facilities. Similar palettes help create a Salus brand and link the centers to the company's six other facilities across the country. "New, fresh, and boutique-y," is how Maureen Rosen, wife of Dr. Rosen and design consultant to Jamie Bush, describes the interiors.

Delightful surprises start at the entrance. Custom wenge receptionists' desks anchor both spaces with their dark, textural luxury. Carpet, also custom, adds to the glamorous, mid-century feel, while transitional, modern, and Asian-influenced pieces maintain the aesthetic. The palette and materials—a far cry from the typical teal and plastic found in traditional healthcare—even coordinate with the doctor's scrubs. Yet it still is healthcare. All of the seating, aside from a few couches, have arms to assist patients in sitting and rising.



Doctors' lounges in all the facilities remain semi-sterile, but their luxury is full-strength. The Fort Lee room offers a view (above), while its men's bathroom (left) features textural tile and wallcoverings along with a pop of eye-catching color on the sink wall. Like all staff spaces, the kitchen (opposite) was designed to elevate the concept of healthcare.



Both waiting rooms have natural daylight, but Bush controlled the environment with sheer draperies. "The views are to a parking lot or housing so by covering the windows we intensify the light yet immediately draw the focus to this internal world," he says. Screens divide the space into intimate seating areas so patients and their families can cocoon.

The private consultation room, right off of the main waiting area, features salmon-colored, grass cloth wallcoverings and wood cabinetry. This is the final step before a patient moves into surgery so the close warmth of the space feels like a final hug. From here on out,— Bush had to design sterile or semi-sterile environments.

They are, however, no less luxurious. Semi-sterile areas like the locker rooms look more like a spa retreat than a medical facility. Hexagonal floor tiles here and in the restrooms add visual texture, and while the benches look like leather they are actually wipable and scrubbable vinyl. Both men's and women's restrooms feature bold tile walls, adding color in high-impact, cost-effective spots.

Doctors' lounges feel clubby and cozy. While everything is anti-bacterial, the Caesar Stone counters and stainless-steel appliances don't look medicinal. The Short Hills lounge doesn't have windows so Bush employed cove lighting and lots of reflective materials like shimmery fabrics and mercury glass to give the impression of a light-filled space.

Pre-op and post-op areas also received the luxury touch. Chairs are vinyl-covered, not with a whimsical or falsely cheery fabric, but with a rich creamy beige. Privacy curtains are shot through with shimmery fibers, adding to the layered luxury. Fully-sterile operating rooms show off state-of-the-art equipment and technology.

Patients end their time at these centers in a private discharge room. Vinyl floors that look like maple, art, and plasma screen TVs make these rooms comfortable. Mirrors remain noticeably absent. Discharge and entry paths never cross, potentially easing anxiety from parties both coming and going.



who

Projects: Short Hills Surgery Center and Hudson Crossing Surgery Center. *Client:* Salus Surgical Group; Dr. Randy Rosen, CEO; Tina Macica, project manager. *Architect:* Ramer Architecture; Richard Ramer, principal architect. *Architect of record:* Swanke Hayden Connell Architecture; James Case, principal architect; Donald Schad, Sung Jong Park, project architects. *Interior designer:* Bush Interiors; Jamie Bush, principal designer; Candice Goodwin, project manager. *Design consultant:* L3P; Maureen Rosen. *Structural engineer:* Consulting Engineers Collaborative. *MEP engineer:* Caretsky & Associates; Zvi Herskovits. *General contractor:* Sweetwater Construction. *Construction manager:* Matt Herbert, Brian Furka. *Photographer:* Gray Crawford.

what

Wallcoverings: Astek, LBI Boyd, Wolf-Gordon. *Paint:* Sherwin-Williams. *Laminate:* Lamin-Art, Pionite. *Dry wall:* US Gypsum. *Tile:* Bisazza, Waterworks, Dal Tile, Almost Aqua. *Floor tile:* Walker Zanger, Anne Sacks. *Flooring:* Lonseal, Armstrong. *Carpet:* Lees Carpet, Cactus Mat Co. *Lighting:* In Mod, Weiss and Beiheler, Remains Lighting, The Kentfield Collection, Primelight, Boyd Lighting, Remains Lighting, Primelight, Comfort Lume, Columbia Lighting, Metalumen. *Window treatments:* Custom by Acme, Drapemaster, MechoShade. *Patient room seating:* Herman Miller, Kartell. *Patient room lighting:* Legion Comfort Lume. *Lounge seating:* Weego Home, John Charles Furniture, Steven Anthony Furniture, Design Within Reach, Crate and Barrel, Paston Raleigh Everett, Herman Miller, Janus et Cie. *Upholstery:* John Charles Fabrics, Donghia, Herman Miller, Fabricut, Kravet, Robert Allen, Arabel Fabrics. *Cafeteria/dining/conference tables:* Allan Copley Designs, Weego Home. *Coffee/side tables:* Custom by Weego Home, Design Within Reach. *Files/shelving:* Herman Miller. *Woodworking/cabinetmaking:* Target Contracting, Central Millwork of New Jersey. *Artwork:* Art Source LA. *Signage:* Signal Sign Company. *Plumbing fixtures:* Dornbracht, Duravit, Bates & Bates.

where

Location: Short Hills, NJ. *Total floor area:* 24,000 sq. ft. *No. of floors:* 1. *No. of beds:* 24. *Location:* Fort Lee, NJ. *Total floor area:* 21,000 sq. ft. *No. of floors:* 1. *No. of beds:* 19.

The Short Hills and Fort Lee facilities are doctor owned and operated. Far from scoffing at the concept of luxury surroundings, the doctors embraced the idea, and the pride of ownership runs deep. "At the Short Hills opening one doctor started crying," reports Bush. "This environment makes patients and staff feel cared for in luxurious and unexpected ways."

And that love will be spread further—possibly worldwide. Las Vegas and Manhattan centers are in the works. Dr. Rosen is even in talks with the U.S. Olympic Committee to put a center in China for the big event in 2008. "We would bring in our staff for the games and after hire local physicians or bring our surgeons back and forth," says Rosen. Bringing the gold long after the closing event. ☐



collective memory

A refreshing revamp by Kokaistudios gives this colonial building a new spirit and its customers an infinite dining experience, day and night

By Celia Ying
Photography by Charlie Xia, Maodou



Albeit undergoing one of the fastest economic expansions in the world, Shanghai's modernization is yet deeply linked to its colonial past—the extravagance, the indulgence, the romance, and the fantasy. It is undeniable that, even in the 21st century, Shanghai still is known in the West for its infamous role as the base of European imperialism during the pre-war period.

Strolling along the Bund, exploring the pockets of colonial architecture in the old French Concession, one can easily recollect the memory of the flourishing days this city once enjoyed thanks to the great efforts paid by both locals and ex-patriots to preserve the monumental cityscape. Amidst this culture-led regeneration process, one of the latest additions that contributes to the city's dynamic contrast is the Foreign Culture Club (FCC).

Located at the old French Concession in Jing'an District, FCC is a project co-developed by the owner, the interior designer, and the visual designer so to create a new concept for food and beverage—a place that is not just a restaurant but a meeting point to have different experiences all day long. This wonderful 1930s colonial mansion houses a French patisserie, a Mediterranean restaurant, a Vietnamese restaurant, and a lounge space. As a matter of fact, the aqua bar in the FCC is the first one to open in Shanghai.

Located on the old French Concession in the Jing'an District, the Foreign Culture Club is a beautiful historic mansion from the 30s (left). Teak floors and surfaces are complemented by the iconic pattern laser-cut in 2-mm.-thick aluminum panels (opposite) spreading from wall to ceiling, resulting in a spectacular balance of light, shadows, and strong, warm colors.







The very symmetrical logo is used in several ways throughout the interiors, such as in the relief tiles in the staircases (left) that connect the restaurants and custom-made wall-coverings in the lounge areas. The French restaurant La Terrace (opposite and above) features a light, fresh palette with reflective surfaces. At the night warm light plays on the shiny pearl white curtains and mirror walls.

Despite the richness and variety the FCC now enjoys, the original plan, according to the owner Edwin Ng, was just to build a single restaurant. "Our initial concept to design the FCC premise was to have a Vietnamese restaurant. However, because of its huge space, we need to make it a multifunctional entertaining spot to make the space more attractive," says Ng. "We expect FCC to give the customers a new dining concept, not only for good food, but also for the experiences."

Helping Ng to realize his vision was the Italian design firm Kokaistudios, whose commissions ranged from restorations to designing commercial and public cultural projects all over Europe, the United States, and Greater China. "The design concept was developed in close collaboration with the client, whose general vision was to create the first concept restaurant in Shanghai. Together, we visualized a modern and colorful space that offers different strong dining experiences," says Filippo Gabbiani, the chief architect of Kokaistudios.



In general the renovation of the historical building focuses on two different programs based on the different levels of conservation in the building: the exteriors have been protected in order to preserve the overall mood of the historical compound; the interiors have been modified and completely redecorated with a new strong character. Particular attention has been given to the design of a new winter garden on the ground floor, which is conceived as a filter of light between the public space of the park and the privacy of the restaurant. This space, together with the original terraces, becomes the connection between interior and exterior, creating a dialogue between the interiors and the park.

According to Gabbiani, materials and colors of the two main restaurants were chosen with the awareness of how light differs during day and night. He explains: "The colors you find at La Terrace are light and fresh, and the surfaces reflective and mostly white, and yet the atmosphere does not lack warmth thanks to the amount of greenery that creates the garden feeling. During the night the dramatic elegance is revealed when the warm light plays on the shiny pearl white curtains and mirror walls."

The Club Vietnam, on the other hand, is located on the back of the building and rarely catches a ray of light. The designer filled it up with a rich color scheme, wooden floors and surfaces, together with laser-cut patterns in 2-mm.-thick aluminum panels. By illuminating the background a balance of light, shadows, and strong warm colors is created. "Whenever you

create a concept space, you are facing the challenge of making each space equally visible, reachable, and interesting without using static layouts or too similar design concepts. We believe that the Foreign Culture Club is inviting to the most different people all day long," notes Gabbiani.

It is always a challenging task to keep a good balance between conservation and innovation in restoring an historical building. But for Kokaistudios—which is well-known for the prestigious Bund 18 project that has been recognized with the Award of distinction by UNESCO in the 2006 Asia Pacific Heritage Awards for Culture Heritage Conservation programs—the FCC is another perfect exercise to demonstrate the firm's restoration and reinvention capabilities. "The ideal case is, of course, to find a structure that has not been touched or destroyed during the last decades so that our work can be based on the original layouts and details," remarks Gabbiani. "In the case of the FCC, the main scope was to 'clean' the interiors in order to be able to add a design strong enough to fill the walls with an entirely new spirit and modern impression."

In the newly renovated FCC, every space is carefully designed considering the perception of the public, with more than 20 colors combining to form a palette that creates different moods and levels of complexity. The designer has successfully turned the interiors into a journey of strong visual experience and an epitome of Shanghai's past glory. ©



who

Project, client: Foreign Culture Club. *Interior designer:* Kokaistudios; Filippo Gabbiani, Nora Von Nordenskjöld, Chara Yang, Gene Wang. *M&E engineer, general contractor, construction manager:* Edwin Ng. *Acoustics/lighting consultant:* Kokaistudios. *Furniture dealer:* ONES. *Photographer:* Charlie Xia, Maodou.

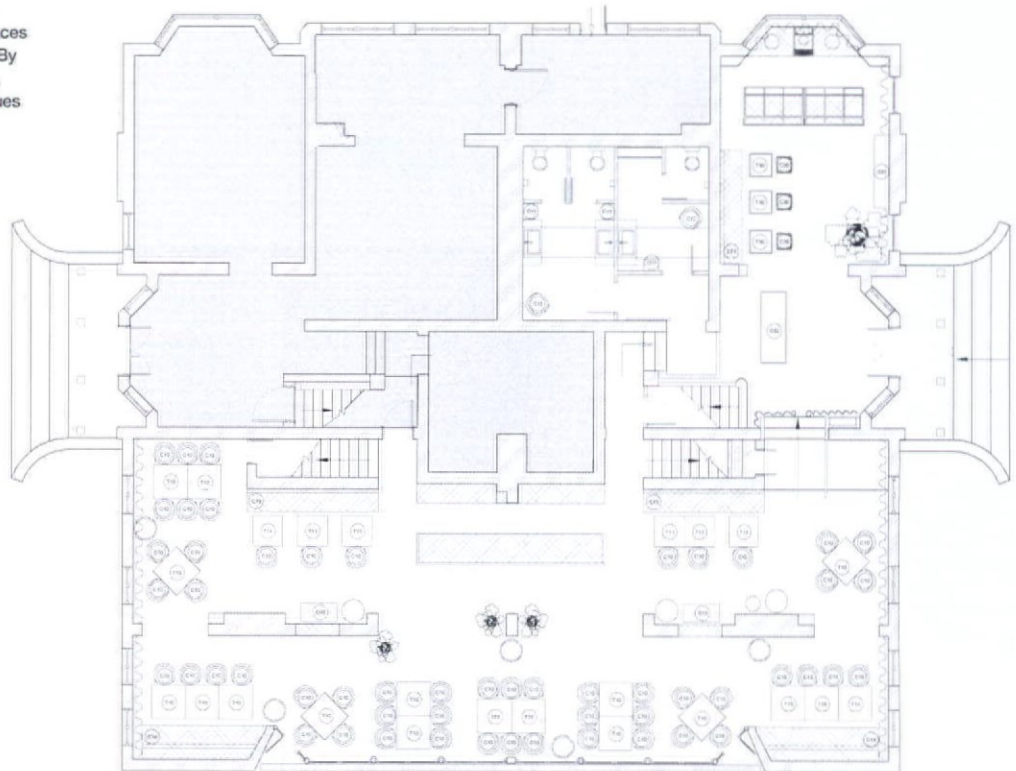
what

Paint: Benjamin Moore. *Laminate:* German. *Flooring:* L&D Ceramica, TGT Ceramica. *Mirror mosaics, relief wall tiles, and custom wall finish:* subcontractor, sponge finish paints, and lacquers by contractor. *Ceiling:* Aluminum panels laser cut by contractor. *Partition, glass:* by contractor. *Carpet/carpet tile:* Interface. *Doors, shelving/cabinetry:* custom by contractor. *Door fixtures:* Mr. Lock. *Furniture systems, conference chairs/table:* by owner. *Lounge seating:* custom by ONES. *Lighting:* Local Custom Fabrications, Siemes. *Window treatment:* custom.

where

Location: Shanghai, China. *Total floor area:* 986 sq. m. *No. of floors:* 4 (including mezzanine). *Total capacity:* 250.

Interiors of Club Vietnam restaurant (above) pick up the rich, indochine color range with wooden floors and surfaces and laser-cut patterns in 2-mm.-thick aluminum panels. By illuminating the background a balance of light, shadows, and strong warm colors is created. A rich palette continues in the indigo-colored tile bathrooms (opposite).



design

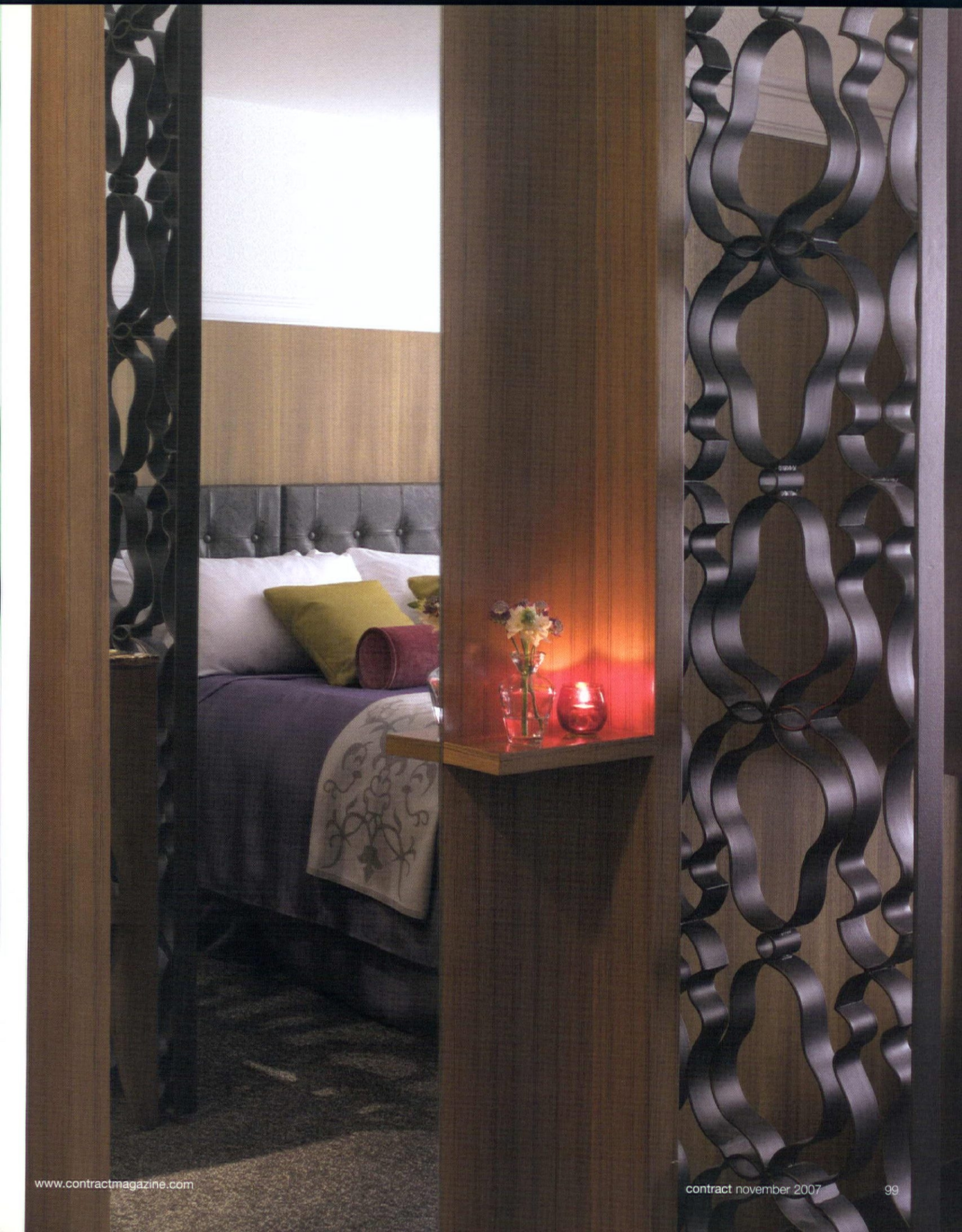


hot sax

MCCARTAN gleans inspiration from eclectic sources to design the high-end Hotel Sax, which promises to be the next hottest thing to hit Chicago's Marina City

By Danine Alati
Photography by Andrew Bordwin

Crimson Lounge (above) delivers a sensory overload with layers upon layers of design in the form of a dark, red-infused palette with a handcrafted 45-ft. bar that runs the length of the back wall. Guestrooms (opposite) are designed as high-end retreats with a more subdued palette including Egyptian cotton linens, rich velvet throw pillows, and leather headboard.



Ever think you'd see an interior design where 21st century Versailles meets Marquis de Sade with a dash of ecclesiastical influence as well as Asian and Indian inspirations in a landmark Chicago building? Hotel Sax Chicago boasts interiors by New York-based MCCARTAN that reference the House of Blues nightclub across the street in the ostentatious Crimson Lounge juxtaposed against the more formal lobby space to form a virtual hodgepodge of design themes under one roof.

Designers were tasked with refreshing what was formerly the House of Blues Hotel in Chicago's Marina City into the new Hotel Sax with references to the Foundation Room, a selective VIP lounge area of House of Blues. "The Foundation Room is completely over the top," says Colum McCartan, founder of his hospitality design firm. "The owner is an avid collector of artifacts from India and Asia—so that the space had its own curator. It's completely outrageous and has nothing to do with rock 'n' roll. And while we didn't want to replicate it, we took that inspiration and injected a strong sense of theater into our designs."

MCCARTAN designed the interiors of the lobby, Crimson Lounge, and guestrooms, while Chicago-based VOA completed the documentation and meeting spaces, and Gemstone Hotels & Resorts International manages the property. "We selected MCCARTAN because the designers are not afraid to be

different, and they understand hotels and bars. And VOA designs great meeting spaces for high-end corporations. We were looking for firms that were not tethered to the genetic code and one-space-fits-all solutions," explains Mark van Hartesvelt, principal at Gemstone, adding, "The results so far have been on target—some parts are stunning, nothing is bad—and the hotel definitely does not look like a brand with hundreds of twin sisters."

Part of what attracted McCartan to this project was the flexibility in the program. "We had more freedom than usual to be more expressive, more theatrical," he says. "We were not locked into any design genre." For example, certain pieces are reminiscent of Louis XIV, but with a Spanish flair. "There's a 14th century language, but it's jumbled," he adds, "like a tongue-in-cheek-reference to the Renaissance."

With the green light to employ a potpourri of design influences, MCCARTAN set out to create a unique luxury hotel experience on the Chicago scene. "Our efforts were totally collaborative and iterative. We focus on the function of design, leaving the 'form' to the pros," van Hartesvelt says. "We explained the research results on the target customers—what they want, what they get now from luxury hotels, and where we thought the disconnects are. We felt like we were designing something that doesn't exist in our competitive set."





Guests realize they're in for a glam hotel experience as they enter the sleek lobby (opposite), replete with Italian marble floors, lounge furniture positioned as sculpture in the space, and custom-designed pendant light fixtures by MCCARTAN (below). But the tide turns upon opening the door to the Crimson Lounge (above), designed as a playful fantasy world of rich color, lush texture, and globally influenced pattern. Little vignettes within the space are separated by ornate screens (right).

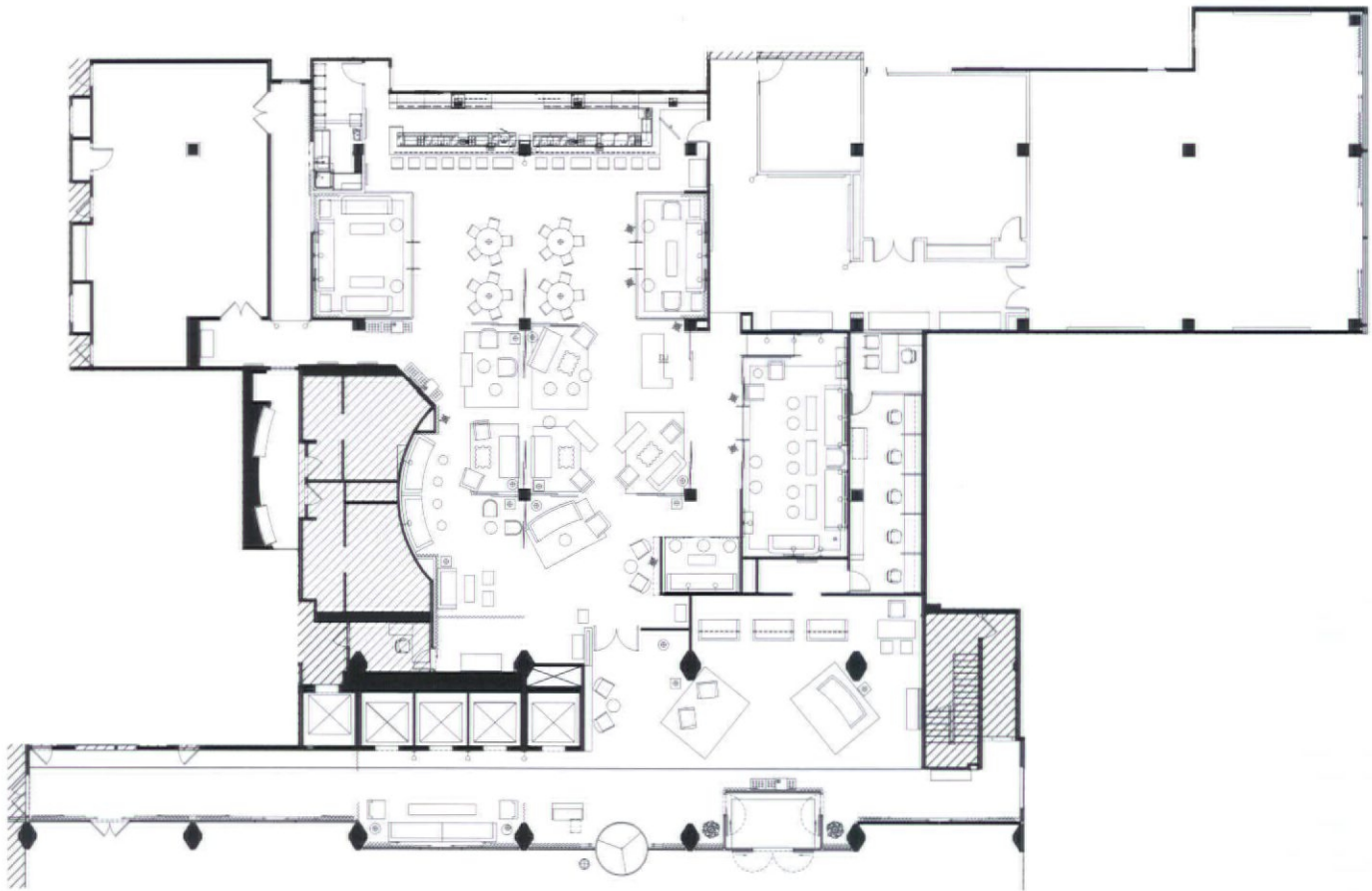




The air of luxury is apparent upon entering the sleek lobby, where white custom paneling and Italian marble floors form a very white, spare backdrop. Mirrored walls reflect the furniture set at the center of the room as sculpture. According to McCartan, “The lobby looks like a Tiffany jewelry store with the glass cases,” which only enhances the upscale aura. Yet mood shifts drastically upon opening the door to Crimson Lounge, with an “uproar of pattern and design, like embarking on a fairytale,” McCartan says.

“Crimson Lounge is incredibly ostentatious—a little bit sacrilegious—with layers upon layers of design,” he says. “The space is a series of rooms, little vignettes, separated by glass screens to create this layered effect of texture and color.” A sensory overload of a sensuous palette of deep red tones, tactile surfaces, rich woods including a 45-ft. bar, and exotic accents from around the globe, Crimson embodies the opulence of the House of Blues Foundation room with a fresh, updated twist.

But the sassy design touches don’t end in Hotel Sax’s public spaces, as the guestrooms provided another arena for McCartan and his team to flex their design muscles. They had to make the most of the footprint allotted by this landmark structure, which proved challenging at times. For example, the sixth floor “cabin” rooms—“little jewel boxes,” as McCartan calls them—had lower ceilings, which dwarfed the space. As a result, designers employed ornate, custom screens to delineate space while allowing a visual connection and light penetration throughout. To remain within budget, while still



imparting a feeling of opulence, MCCARTAN clad certain guestroom walls with a wallcovering patterned with the silhouette of a chandelier to express design that is high-end and tongue-in-cheek at once. And stymied by the lack of infrastructure support, plug-in capabilities, and cable management of this old building, MCCARTAN custom designed night stands with plug-in accommodations.

A satisfying exercise for McCartan, he was able to select and coordinate such a huge number of eclectic pieces of furniture and lighting—some custom-designed by his firm—as well as solve very specific design quagmires that were unique to this project. “Both form and function work together in this project, and the design is cool,” van Hartesvelt boasts. “We will see how it performs versus other Chicago hotels; this town has always had style and a unique class. That said, I believe our focus on functionality and our positioning will allow us to compete effectively.” He eagerly adds, “Let’s see how it performs. I think we built a race horse, and I can’t wait for 2008.”

MCCARTAN dealt with preexisting challenges of this landmark building in guestroom configurations (opposite top) by designing custom nightstands that accommodate technology needs and employing ornate, wrought iron screens to divide space while allowing visual connection. Wall-mounted, flat-screen televisions and a wallcovering with a chandelier silhouette (opposite bottom) impart a sense of luxury and high-end amenities.

who

Project: Hotel Sax Chicago. *Client:* La Salle Hotel Properties (owner); Gemstone Resorts International (management company). *Architect:* VOA Associates. *Interior designer:* MCCARTAN. *Mechanical engineer:* American Engineering. *Electrical engineer:* JEK Engineering. *General contractor:* O’Malley Construction. *Construction manager:* Geoff Connus. *Furniture dealer:* Bray Whaler. *Photographer:* Andrew Bordwin.

what

Wallcoverings: Surface Materials, Tri-Kes, Versa, Astek. *Paint:* Benjamin Moore, Sherwin-Williams. *Carpet/carpet tile:* Signature Carpet. *Lighting:* Cai Lighting, Cooper Lighting, Erco Lighting, Kurt Verson, Lightolier, Lucifer Lighting, Robert Abbey, RSA Lighting, Siena Designs. *Doors, glass:* Carvart. *Door hardware:* Forms & Surfaces. *Railings/screens/grill work:* D’Style. *Guestroom casegoods/beds:* Sorrentino Mariani. *Guestroom tables:* International Furnishings. *Guestroom lighting:* Neidhart Lighting. *Guestroom seating:* Designer’s Furniture. *Lounge seating:* Astoria Imports, Old Hickory Tannery. *Occasional furniture:* Old Hickory Tannery. *Architectural woodworking:* O’Malley Construction. *Guestroom plumbing fixtures:* Hansgrohe, Moen, American Standard, Kohler.

where

Location: Chicago, IL. *Total floor area:* 19,000 sq. f. (typical guestroom floors). *No. of floors:* 15. *No. of beds:* 353.

designers rate



Michael Moeller
Designer
BBG-BBGM
New York



Jill Cole
Co-founder/President
Cole Martinez Curtis
Marina Del Rey, Calif.

Photo credit Mark Humphrey.

hotel furnishings

Contract asks two designers to name and explain their preferred products



Fuse Lighting, Oslo.
Circle No. 225



Strakx, Dingklik.
Circle No. 226



Sutherland Furniture, Soft Breeze.
Circle No. 227

Michael Moeller
BBG-BBGM

Fuse Lighting Oslo

www.fuselighting.com

A great way to bring a hard finish to a soft space, the simple Oslo sconce makes quite a large statement with its clean architectural lines and warming ambient glow. And it relates to pretty much all genres of design.

Strakx Dingklik

www.strakxdesign.com

An excellent vanity seat, foot stool, or luggage rack, the Dingklik stool is a small piece with a lot of character that is the perfect juxtaposition for any style interior.

Sutherland Furniture Soft Breeze

www.sutherlandteak.com

This lounge chair is sexy, sleek, and modern, but its soft curves and tapered legs take you back to the classics—a perfectly classic modern piece of furniture.



General Electric, Compact Fluorescent Lamps.
Circle No. 228

Jill Cole
Cole Martinez Curtis

General Electric
Compact Fluorescent Lamps
www.gelighting.com

GE's newest compact fluorescent lamps (CFL) are color corrected so that designers can attractively and adequately light rooms, while also being energy efficient and environmentally considerate. We use color corrected CFLs whenever we can in guestrooms and have used them in recent Hotel Valley Ho and Mayfair hotel projects.

LG
Digital widescreen flat TVs
www.lge.com

Their affordable, attractive design, and—more importantly—slim shape has enabled hospitality designers to radically reconceive guestrooms by eliminating the restriction of boxy old TV sets that we used to feel needed to be hidden. LG's new flat-screen technology has afforded opportunities for new and interesting guestroom layouts, as it was one of the first companies to create an affordable flat panel format that was suitable for the hospitality industry.

Kohler
San Raphael Toilet
www.kohler.com

As one of the first manufacturers to create products that respected the environment, Kohler products are well designed, reasonably priced, and also save water. The Water Sense-labeled San Raphael Toilet, for example, is attractive, functional, conserves water, and is ADA compliant.



LG, Digital Widescreen Flat TVs.
Circle No. 229



Kohler, San Raphael.
Circle No. 230

top cats

How do firms attract experienced talent? And once they get them, how do they keep them happily purring along?

By Amy Milshtein

Good help is hard to find, and nowhere is that more true than at the mid- to upper-level in an architecture/design firm. "The industry is choked with work nowadays," half-laments Richard Brayton of Brayton & Hughes Design Studio in San Francisco. "It's become really hard to find good, qualified talent in need of a job."

Cultivating home-grown talent remains a popular method of finding and retaining the next big stars. "We find the best way to develop the middle strata is to promote from within," relates Alexis Rappaport, vice president at Clive Wilkinson Architects in West Hollywood, Calif. "People who have come up through the ranks understand the process and values of the firm and really click with the work."

Ron Fiegenschuh, partner of Washington, D.C.'s Lehman, Smith & McLeish, agrees. "We have a hard time finding people at this level," he reports. "We like to recruit recent graduates or professionals with five to seven years of experience and cultivate them."

Still as Brayton puts it, "there are only so many interns and recent graduates you can hire." So how do you find that next level? Along with the obvious head hunters and ads in the industry publications, word-of-mouth holds lots of sway. "We count a lot on our studio people to make associations, and you hear things through the grapevine," says Fiegenschuh. "Vendors are a great source of information," adds Brayton. "People are either happy at their job or not, and vendors are privy to that information."

Fiegenschuh is careful not to specifically target other offices and cherry pick talent. "I think that's lousy," he says. Instead, he and the other two interviewees rely on their firm's reputation, scope

of work, and design quality to lure people in. "Potential hires come to us because they are intrigued by what we do," says Rappaport.

Once hires are on the hook, firms need to reel them in. Salary, of course, represents a tasty lure. "We offer great wages," says Fiegenschuh. "I think in this business you get what you pay for—top talent for top dollar." The bottom line, however, is not the only factor to consider. "Pay is important, but it's the whole array of benefits that keep people happy," says Brayton. "We offer the full medical, dental and

We are always recruiting. The right people mean the right work. Employees hired during crisis mode seldom work out, so that means we are always looking for the next star.

vision benefits, 401K, long-term disability along with bonuses and profit sharing. We even have two new dads out on paternity leave right now."

However, one thing many firms don't offer is flex time. "Our work is so team oriented and collaborative that it doesn't make sense for our culture," explains Rappaport. Brayton agrees. "We do offer flexibility but not usually for our creative teams," he says. "But we are liberal with our vacation policy. This is a high-stress business, and people need time away."

Do egos at this level ever play a role in team dynamics? "Egos? We never have any egos," says Rappaport with a laugh. "Actually our process is so team oriented and collaborative that egos seldom get in the way." Brayton actually sees a mellowing of self-absorption at this level. "People at this stage are more secure in their abilities and self

aware. That leads to fewer attitudes," he says. "Often it's the youngsters right out of school that think they know everything."

Fiegenschuh has a different take. "We are all designers, and design is ego driven," he says. "It's healthy and makes us excel at what we do. However, the work is never about the individual. I won't say we've never had an ego problem but that's why we have a 90-day probation period. After that it's pretty clear if the person is a good fit or if it's time to cut bait."

Often, people at this level are making their last moves before starting out on their own. This can be a bittersweet time for designer and firm. "When great contributors leave, it's always sad," says Rappaport. "But there is always a level of pride when you see them strike out on their own."

"A hire's entrepreneurship is one quality that makes them so appealing," adds Brayton. "And that's what drives them to go out on their own. We've spawned between eight to 10 individual firms from our ranks, and it's great to see them doing well."

To keep up with the constant churn, Fiegenschuh's philosophy is: "We are always recruiting. The right people mean the right work. Employees hired during crisis mode seldom work out, so that means we are always looking for the next star." ■



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can big box retailers learn from boutique hotels?

Counter-intuitive notion? Maybe.
But let's take a closer look.

By Diane Klein, ESI Design

Yes, boutique hotel operators have much larger design budgets than big box retailers—and they don't have the same cookie cutter design constraints. But, over the last decade, they have taken a commodity product and made it into a high-margin customer offering. And they did it by manipulating the traditional elements of successful retailing: brand, design, and service.

Can big box retailers do the same? Perhaps they can't completely, given their inherent overhead limitations, significant investment in real estate, and need to serve a mass market. But they can, with a relatively minimal investment, use design and service improvements to attract and retain high-margin customers. In addition, these improvements can deepen customer relationships and help incentivize (and retain) their best sales personnel.

Looking across a wide range of retailers, here are five ways to put these ideas into practice without turning your existing store format upside down.

Communicate your brand.

Whole Foods nails this lesson by seamlessly integrating design, store layout, messaging, and customer interaction to meet brand expectations on the selling floor both in specialty areas and high-velocity aisles.

Differentiate with design.

Compare Target and Wal-Mart. Both are big boxes with minimal sales help. But Target uses design to enhance and differentiate its sales environment. Guess whose customer service satisfaction ratings—and stock price—are going up?

Make the connection.

Take a page out of old-school retailing, and bring back the personal touch. Department stores like Bloomingdale's and Macy's make good use of in-store personal shopping assistant services to enhance the customer experience and provide a reason for high-margin customers to keep coming back.



Escape, powered by Best Buy, in Chicago, designed and developed by ESI Design

Create experiential selling islands.

Home Depot and REI use boutiques and specialty focal areas on their selling floors to support well-trained staff in determining and meeting customer needs. This concierge approach is especially attractive to high-margin customers with high service expectations.

Try before you buy.

Big box retailers can't afford to change store format on a whim. That's why Best Buy (an ESI Design client) likes to experiment with small-store formats and then bring successful concepts into new store designs and retrofits.

What lessons can we draw from these real-world examples?

First, it's interesting to note that these retailers are using enhanced design and service delivery rather than altering the entire selling environment, which is all but impossible for most big box retailers to do without changing their whole success model.

Second, each retailer is using these elements as a springboard to cultivate deeper relationships by creating experiences that resonate with customers, putting them on the path to increased satisfaction, loyalty, and profitable growth.

Finally, and perhaps least obvious, they create vehicles to empower associates on the selling floor, which can be a lonely place to be in the typical big box. Sales associates welcome a context that makes them look and feel more credible and knowledgeable to customers. ☐

Since joining ESI Design in 1989, Diane Klein has played a strong leadership role in managing the firm and its major projects, including the Sony Plaza/Sony Wonder, Pope John Paul II Cultural Center, and Time Warner's Home to the Future installation. She currently oversees the development and implementation of experiential retail concepts for Best Buy.

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room rage

Forget the heavenly bed—business travelers prefer heavenly hotel workspaces

By Jon Strassner

Show me a business traveler working happily in a hotel room, and I'll show you someone who can build a workstation out of 600 thread count Egyptian sheets. I'm on the road three nights a week, so my perspective on hotels may be somewhat skewed. I may, in fact, be a little bit obsessive....I've been called worse.

If you let the room get to you, it'll drive you to drink. But the solution won't be at the bottom of the \$6 bottle of spring water so conveniently placed on your nightstand.

Despite the challenges I face on the road, I can hardly call home to complain to my wife. Whose version of tending the home fires means transporting and managing the lifestyles of four very active children. That conversation would go something like this:

My wife: "Hello?" (Screaming and gunshots in the background.)

Me: "Hi, Honey, how's it going?" (Gentle mood music playing.)

My wife: "Take a guess. You've left me with four kids, no gas, and no groceries. Thanks for that. What's up with you?" (More screaming and gunshots.)

Me: "I'm checked in. But the room is cold, and I can't get the thermostat figured out. There's really nowhere to plug in my laptop. And the mint they left on the pillow is dark chocolate. I hate dark chocolate. Hey, have we watched *The Bourne Ultimatum* yet? It's on Pay-Per-View...." (More mood music)

My wife: (icy silence)

Me: "Hello?...Honey?"

I actually think that call could go a lot worse. You see, I am the road warrior—travel weary, airline scarred, and hotel wary....and here's my story.

Hotels don't understand who uses their rooms.

Or at least, they don't understand how their rooms are being used. It seems that most hotels think they're catering to the business traveler when they offer an all-you-can-eat continental breakfast. Hey, I love microwaveable sausage biscuits as much as the next guy, but believe it or not, I'd rather be able to function productively in the room. The business traveler needs a place to work comfortably and efficiently at the end of the day (and likely at the start of the day, as well). The problem with most hotel rooms is the same with most office workstations: they focus on aesthetics, not functionality.

Looking for an outlet?

When I land in a hotel room, the first thing I do is plug in. I need to charge my phone, my laptop, and sometimes my iPod. I put these items on the desk and begin the painful search for a power outlet. Are outlets really so expensive that hotels can't make them readily available? Most hotels are kind enough to provide a desk—usually one of those hospitality style desks—made to match the dresser and nightstands. So why not throw in a couple of outlets within easy reach? I can't tell you how many times I end up on my hands and knees unplugging something to make room for my phone cord. In my experience, the only open plug (if one exists) is most likely behind the headboard, and the last place I want to find myself in a hotel room is on the floor near the headboard. Thanks to the investigative efforts and ultra-violet lights of "Dateline" and "48 Hours," dust bunnies are the least of my worries.



Desk or Night Stand?

So why does the desk have to match the sleeping furniture? I want my workspace to be distinct. I don't want it to seem like I'm working in a bedroom. Do hotels have health clubs that look like bedrooms? Do the treadmills match the nightstands? What would traveling world-class athletes do if hotels merely provided a Suzanne Somers endorsed "Thigh Master" to all guests needing a good workout? If hotels can have Reebok brand their fitness clubs, why can't they provide a better experience for the business traveler who has to be productive and comfortable in the room? Wouldn't it make sense for them to provide desks and task chairs that actually function for someone working on a laptop? As it is, most hotels are only marginally removed from asking a guest to pull the bed up to the desk in order to work. Go ahead, make it look like a workstation—a separate part of the room for a separate task. Give us a light that's made for a desk, not a nightstand. And give us a chair designed for work, not a dining room table.

Forget the bed. Just make my day.

When I climb into my "Heavenly Bed" at the end of the day, I want to be tired, not sore. I want to feel like I got some work done. And I want to do it in something that resembles a work area, not someone else's bedroom. So while I appreciate all the other niceties hotels generally offer, I'll be forever grateful to (and a committed customer of) the hotels that actually get it....the ones that give me a "Heavenly Workspace". ☐

Jon Strassner, LEED AP, is Humanscale's director, A&D North America. He resides in Connecticut and splits his time between the New York office and Manhattan hotel rooms. He may be reached at jstrassner@humanscale.com.

national wallcovering

credits

Firms featured in this issue's design stories:

James Park Associates ("Exotic Essentials," p. 68); Singapore; 65.64.722.776;
www.jpadesign.com

Callison Architecture ("Mix Appeal," p. 76); Seattle; 206.623.4646;
www.callison.com

Huntsman Architectural Group ("In the Driver's Seat," p. 82); San Francisco;
415.394.1212; www.huntsmanag.com

Bush Interiors ("The Finest Cut," p. 88); West Hollywood, CA; 310.289.9667;
www.bushinteriors.net

Kokaistudios ("Collective Memory," p. 86); Shanghai; 86.21.6473.0937;
www.kokaistudios.com

MCCARTAN ("Hot Sax" p. 98); New York; 212.957.1815; www.mccartan.com

Photographers featured in this issue's design stories:

Taj Exotica Resort & Spa ("Exotic Essentials"); Maldives; 960.664.22.00;
www.tajhotels.com

Stefanus Pakan ("Mix Appeal"); Jakarta, Indonesia

David Wakely ("In the Driver's Seat"); San Francisco, 415.861.7503

Grey Crawford ("The Finest Cut"); Los Angeles; 213.220.8968;
www.grey Crawford.com

Charlie Xia ("Collective Memory"); Shanghai;
www.photo.net/photos/Charlie.Xia

Andrew Bordwin ("Hot Sax"); New York, NY; 212.627.9519;
www.bordwin.com

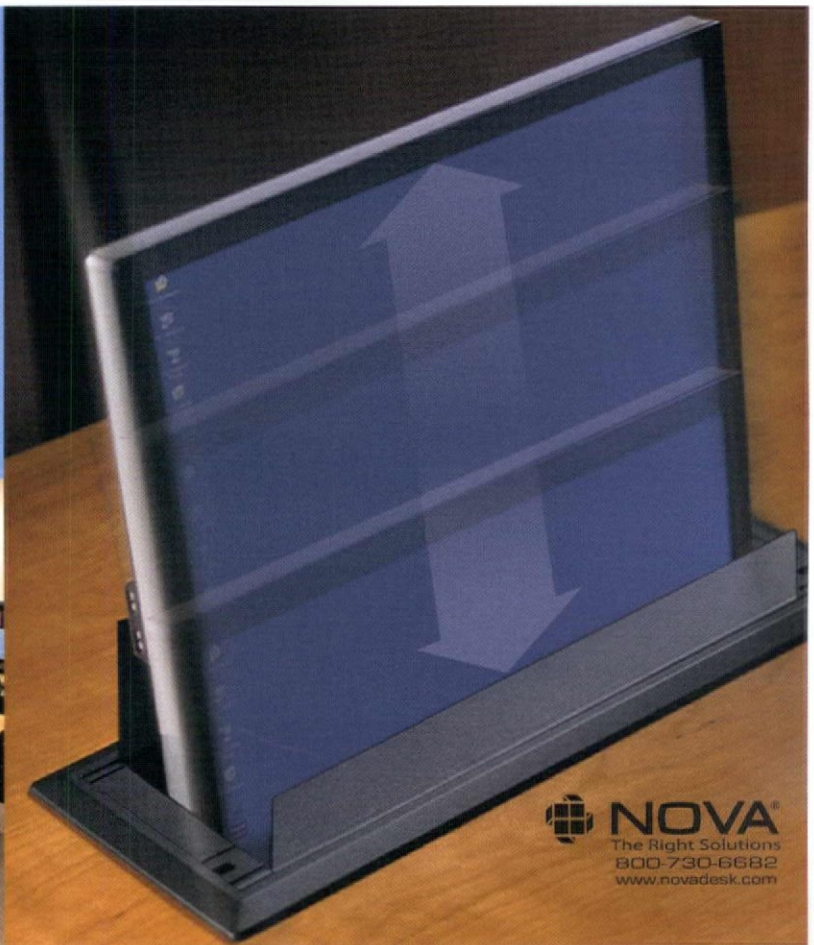
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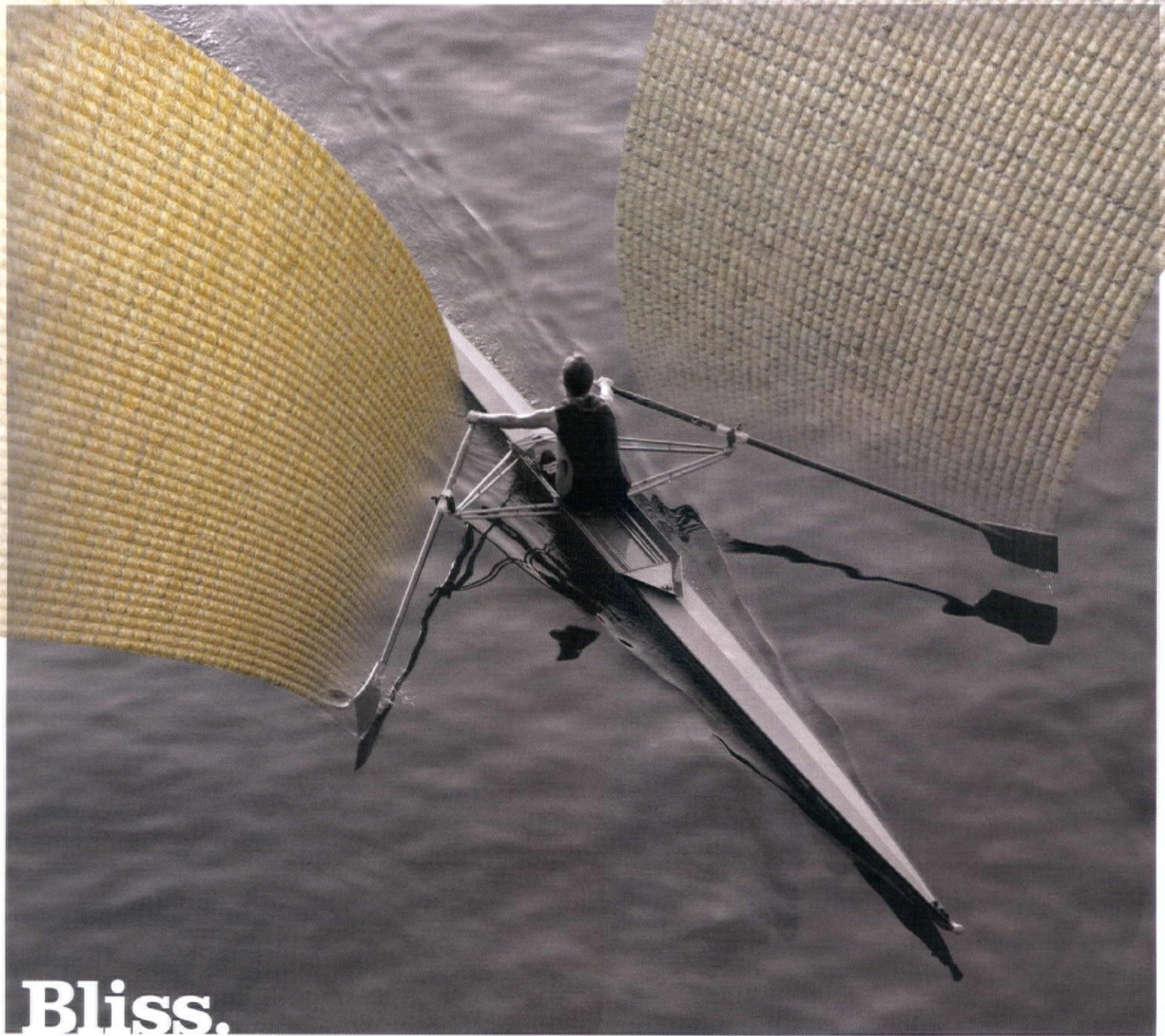
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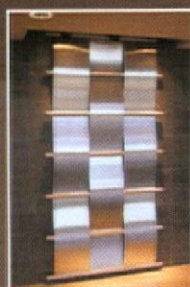
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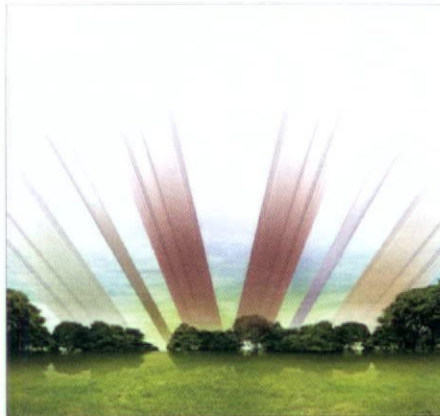
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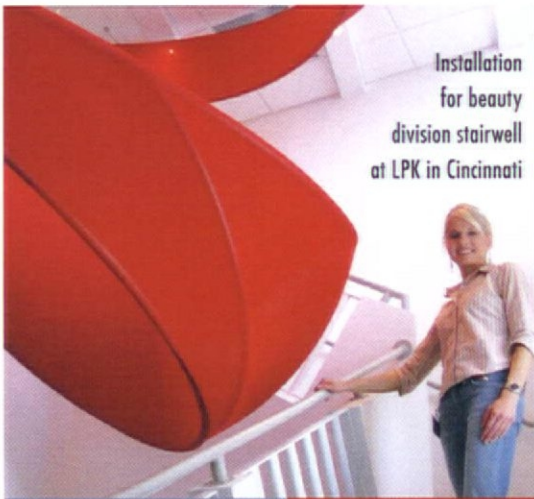


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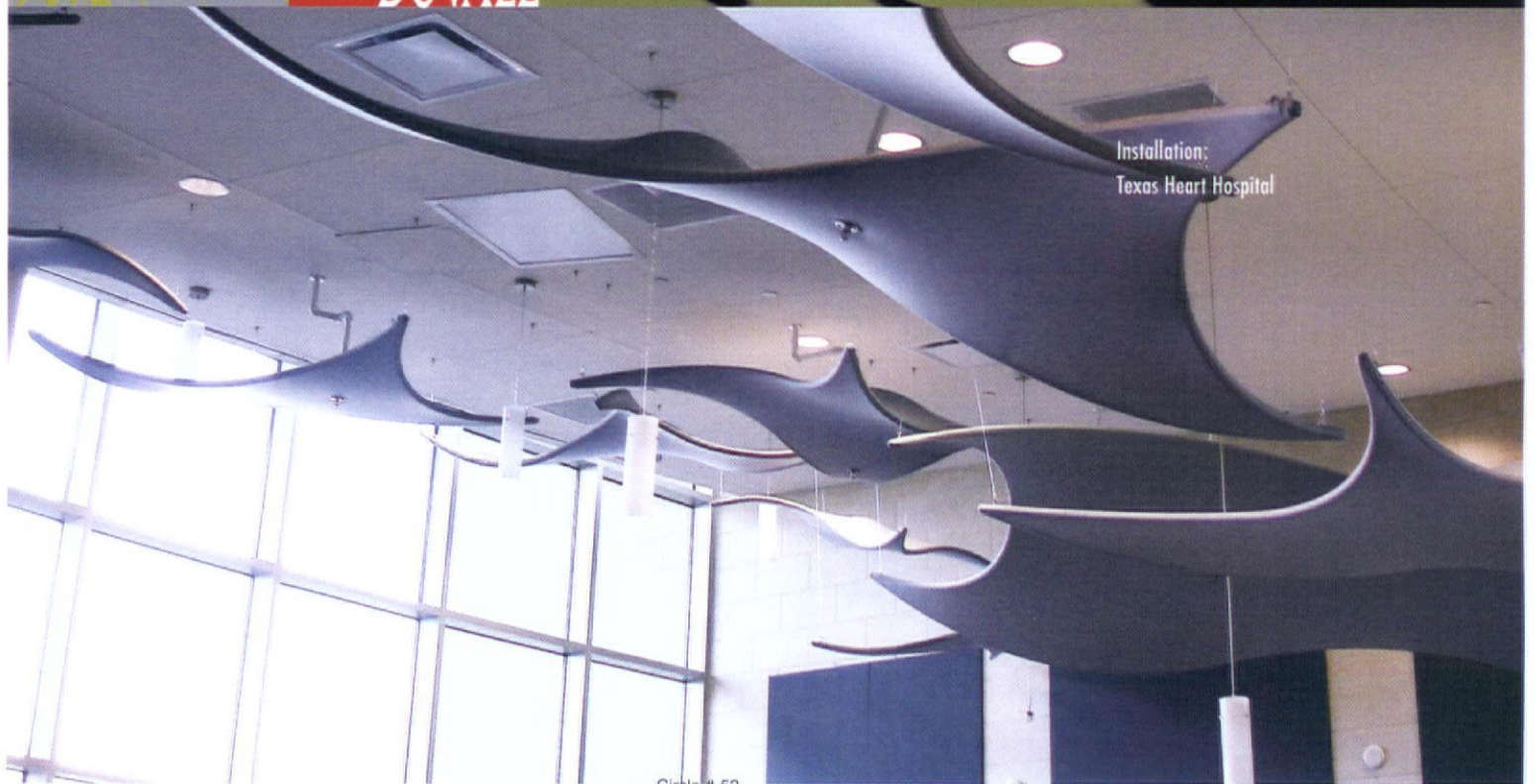
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Curtis J. Moody, FAIA, NCARB

Title/Firm

President and CEO, Moody Nolan, Inc., Columbus, Ohio

Education

Bachelor of Science in Architecture, The Ohio State University

Notable projects

Corazon Club at Tartan West, Ithaca College Athletic and Events Center; Cincinnati School for Creative and Performing Arts, in collaboration with Cole & Russell and Fanning/Howey Associates; Baker University Center at Ohio University Baker, in collaboration with WTW; Time Warner Cable, Mid-Ohio

What do you consider to be your greatest professional achievement?

Overall, I'm most proud of Moody Nolan's tremendous progression from being seen as a business founded by minority architects to a highly accomplished enterprise that is competing on a national scale—being a minority-owned firm is now secondary. Personally, one project stands out as my greatest achievement: The Jerome Schottenstein Center at The Ohio State University. As a former OSU athlete and student, I never dreamed I would design an athletic arena for my alma mater. Coming back to the University and being selected as the architect for the largest athletic arena in the Big 10 Conference is a highlight in my career.

What is the most fulfilling part of your job?

One of the greatest rewards in my job is when I have the opportunity to make clients more culturally responsible. The ability to positively alter preconceived perceptions about the level of service and creativity that a minority architecture firm brings to a project is both personally and professionally gratifying.

If you were not an architect, what other profession might you have chosen?

I did consider being an attorney or a part-time minister. However, I had more of a passion for architecture than I did for law. My aspiration always was, and continues to be, the design and appreciation of buildings.

What is the best thing you've learned in the past 10 years?

Teaming and being a team player is not a universal concept, and not everyone truly understands what it means. We must continually define what it means to work as a "team" more than I ever knew.

What are the biggest challenges facing designers today?

Our profession is full of brilliant, creative people. Yet, because we are so creative, there is often a tendency to not truly listen to what clients want. Before discussing what a project's priorities and deliverables are, we already have in our head what we want versus what our client may need.

What advice would you give to A&D students or those just starting out in the field?

Learn to communicate effectively. We live in a technology-driven culture. While we may be more connected than ever before, it doesn't mean we're connecting in the right ways. Technology is a tool that should be used as an enabler, not as a substitute, for quality communication. You can't replace the value of good, old-fashioned, one-on-one, face-to-face interaction. Working together is critical in our business. Appreciate the person at the other end of the phone or computer.

What advice would you give to clients on how to create a successful project?

Hire someone you trust, and then trust them. Every project has its challenges, but what a successful project boils down to is that you trust that the firm you commissioned is looking out for your best interests. If you believe this, then your project will be a success because you trust that they have the talent and ability to make quality decisions on your behalf.

How do you foresee the future of design changing?

Energy and environmental issues are already increasingly coloring our designs green. This will continue, but sustainable design will become more common sense than an added investment. Green architecture and interior design will soon be second nature and will be intrinsic to every project at the beginning of planning, which will enable us to achieve environmental goals such as LEED certification within our clients' schedule and budget.